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LETTERS  
TO  
YOUNG LADIES.

BY  
MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

"Every sort of useful knowledge should be imparted to the young, not merely for its own sake, but for the sake of its subserviency to higher things."—Mrs. HANNAH MORE.

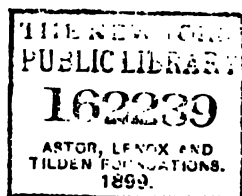
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## P R E F A C E.

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I HAVE been requested to address a few thoughts to the youth of my own sex, on subjects of simple nature, and serious concern. The employment has been pleasant, for their interests are dear to me; and several years devoted to their instruction, have unfolded more fully their claims to regard, and the influence they might exercise in society. Should a single heart, in "life's sweet blossoming season," derive, from this little volume, aid, guidance, or consolation, tenfold satisfaction will be added to the pleasure with which it has been composed.



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## ADDRESS

TO THE

GUARDIANS OF FEMALE EDUCATION.

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IN preparing "Letters to Young Ladies," some reflections have arisen, which claim the attention of the guardians of their education—of those who either prescribe its limits, conduct its details, or rule the mighty engine of publick opinion. They are offered without apology, since the subject of education is now considered worthy to dictate the studies of the sage, the plans of the political economist, and the labours of the patriot. "The mind of the present age acting on the mind of the next," as it has been happily defined by a living writer, is an object of concern to every being endowed with intellect, or interested either through love or hope, in another generation.

Nor has the importance of education in the abstract, been alone conceded. Practical researches for its improvement, have signalized our age and incorporated themselves with its vigorous and advancing spirit. Our most gifted minds have toiled



to devise methods for the instruction of the humblest grades of community, and to make useful knowledge the guest of the common people.

In this elevation of the intellectual standard, our sex have been permitted freely to participate. No Moslem interdict continues to exclude them from the temple of knowledge, and no illusion of chivalry exalts them to an airy height, above life's duties, and its substantial joys.

We are grateful for our heightened privileges. We hope that those who have bestowed them, will be no losers by their liberality. Still we believe that an increase of benefits may be made profitable both to giver, and receiver. We solicit them in the name of the blooming and the beautiful—those rose-buds in the wreath of our country's hope.

It is desirable that their education should be diffused over a wider space of time, and one less encumbered by extraneous objects, and that the depth of its foundation should be more correctly proportioned to the imposing aspect, and redundant ornament of its superstructure. Is it not important that the sex to whom Nature has intrusted the moulding of the whole mass of mind in its first formation, should be acquainted with the structure and developments of mind?—that they who are to nurture the future rulers of a prosperous people, should be able to demonstrate from the broad annal of history, the value of just laws, and the duty of subordination—the blessings which they inherit, and the

danger of their abuse? Is it not requisite, that they on whose bosom the infant heart must be cherished, should be vigilant to watch its earliest pulsations of good or evil?—that they who are commissioned to light the lamp of the soul, should know how to feed it with pure oil?—that they in whose hand is the welfare of beings never to die, should be fitted to perform the work, and earn the plaudit of Heaven?

That the vocation of females is to teach, has been laid down as a position, which it is impossible to contravert. In seminaries, academies and schools, they possess peculiar facilities for coming in contact with the unfolding and unformed mind. It is true, that only a small proportion are engaged in the departments of publick and systematick instruction. Yet the hearing of recitations, and the routine of scholastick discipline, are but parts of education. It is in the domestick sphere, in her own native province, that woman is inevitably a teacher. There she modifies by her example, her dependants, her companions, every dweller under her own roof. Is not the infant in its cradle, her pupil? Does not her smile give the earliest lesson to its soul? Is not her prayer the first messenger for it in the court of Heaven? Does she not enshrine her own image in the sanctuary of the young child's mind, so firmly that no revulsion can displace, no idolatry supplant it? Does she not guide the daughter, until placing her hand in that of her husband, she reaches that pedestal, from whence, in her turn, she

imparts to others, the stamp and colouring which she has herself received? Might she not, even upon her sons, engrave what they shall take unchanged through all the temptations of time, to the bar of the last judgment? Does not the influence of woman rest upon every member of her household, like the dew upon the tender herb, or the sunbeam silently educating the young flower? or as the shower, and the sleepless stream, cheer and invigorate the proudest tree of the forest?

Admitting then, that whether she wills it or not, whether she even knows it or not, she is still a teacher—and perceiving that the mind in its most plastick state is yielded to her tutelage, it becomes a most momentous inquiry what she shall be qualified to teach. Will she not of necessity impart what she most prizes, and best understands. Has she not power to impress her own lineaments on the next generation? If wisdom and utility have been the objects of her choice, society will surely reap the benefit. If folly and self-indulgence are her prevailing characteristicks, posterity are in danger of inheriting the likeness.

This influence is most visible and operative in a republick. The intelligence and virtue of its every citizen have a heightened relative value.—Its safety may be interwoven with the destiny of those, whose birthplace is in obscurity. The springs of its vitality are liable to be touched, or the chords of its harmony to be troubled, by the rudest hands.

Teachers under such a form of government should be held in the highest honour. They are the allies of legislators. They have agency in the prevention of crime. They aid in regulating the atmosphere, whose incessant action and pressure causes the life-blood to circulate, and return pure and healthful to the heart of the nation.

Of what unspeakable importance then, is *her* education, who gives lessons before any other instructor—who pre-occupies the unwritten page of being—who produces impressions which only death can obliterate—and mingles with the cradle-dream what shall be read in Eternity. Well may statesmen and philosophers debate how *she* may be best educated, who is to educate all mankind.

The ancient republicks overlooked the value of that sex, whose strength is in the heart. Greece, so susceptible to the principle of beauty, so skilled in wielding all the elements of grace, failed in appreciating their excellence, whom these had most exquisitely adorned. If, in the brief season of youthful charm, she was constrained to admire woman as the acanthus-leaf of her own Corinthian capital, she did not discover that, like that very column, she was capable of adding stability to the proud temple of freedom. She would not be convinced that so feeble a hand might have aided to consolidate the fabrick, which philosophy embellished, and luxury overthrew.

Rome, notwithstanding her primeval rudeness, seems more correctly than polished Greece, to have estimated the "weaker vessel." Here and there, upon the storm-driven billows of her history, some solitary form towers upward in majesty, and the mother of the Gracchi still stands forth in strong relief, amid imagery over which time has no power. But still, wherever the brute force of the warrior is counted godlike, woman is appreciated only as she approximates to sterner natures: as in that mysterious image which troubled the sleep of Assyria's king—the foot of clay derived consistence from the iron, which held it in combination.

In our own republick, man, invested by his Maker with the right to reign, has conceded to her, who was for ages in vassalage, equality of intercourse, participation in knowledge, dominion over his dearest and fondest hopes. He is content to "bear the burden and heat of the day," that she may dwell in ease and affluence. Yet, from the very felicity of her lot, dangers are generated. She is tempted to be satisfied with superficial attainments, or to indulge in that indolence which corrodes intellect, and merges the high sense of responsibility in its alluring and fatal slumbers.

These tendencies should be neutralized by a thorough and laborious education. Sloth and luxury must have no place in her vocabulary. Her youth should be surrounded by every motive to

application, and her maturity dignified by the hallowed office of rearing the immortal mind. While her partner toils for his stormy portion of that power or glory, from which it is her privilege to be sheltered, let her feel that in the recesses of domestic privacy, she still renders a noble service to the government that protects her, by sowing seeds of purity and peace in the hearts of those, who shall hereafter claim its honours, or control its destinies.

Her place is amid the quiet shades, to watch the little fountain ere it has breathed a murmur. But the fountain will break forth into a rill, and the swollen rivulet rush towards the sea;—and who can be so well able to guide them in right channels, as she who heard their first ripple, and saw them emerge like timid strangers from their source, and had kingly power over those infant-waters, in the name of Him who caused them to flow.

And now, Guardians of Education, whether parents, preceptors, or legislators—you who have so generously lavished on woman the means of knowledge—complete your bounty, by urging her to gather its treasures with a tireless hand. Demand of her as a debt, the highest excellence which she is capable of attaining. Summon her to abandon selfish motives, and inglorious ease. Incite her to those virtues which promote the permanence and health of nations. Make her accountable for the character of the next genera-

tion. Give her solemn charge, in the presence of men and of angels. Gird her with the whole armour of education and of piety—and see if she be not faithful to her children, to her country, and to her God.

## LETTER I.

### VALUE OF TIME.

As nothing truly valuable, my dear young friends, can be attained without industry, so there can be no persevering industry, without a sense of the value of time. Youth would be too happy, might it add to its own beauty and felicity, the wisdom of riper years. Were it possible for it to realize the worth of time, as life's receding hours will reveal it, how rapidly would it press on towards perfection. It is too often the case, that the period allotted to education, is but imperfectly appreciated, till it approaches its close, or has actually departed. Then, its recollections are mingled with regret or repentance ; for experience is more frequently the fruit of our own mistakes and losses, than the result of the admonitions and counsels of others.

Still, the young are sometimes found sedulously regarding the flight of time, and zealously marking it with mental and moral excellence. Illustrating in their practice, the aspiration of the Psalmist, they learn "to number their days, that they may apply their hearts unto wisdom."

Suffer me, then, with the urgency of true



friendship, to impress on you the importance of a just estimation of time. Consider how much is to be performed, attained, and conquered, ere you are fitted to discharge the duties which the sphere of woman comprehends. Think of the brevity of life. The most aged have compared it to a span in compass—and to a shuttle in flight. Compute its bearings upon the bliss or wo of eternity, and remember if mispent, it can never be recalled. Other errors admit of reformation. Lost wealth may be regained, by a course of industry ;—the wreck of health, repaired by temperance ;—forgotten knowledge, restored by study ;—alienated friendship soothed into forgiveness :—even forfeited reputation won back by penitence and virtue. But who ever again looked upon his vanished hours ?—recalled his slighted years and stamped them with wisdom ?—or effaced from Heaven's record, the fearful blot of a wasted life ?

The waste of time in youth, is a greater evil than at any other period of existence. "The misimprovement of youthful days," says an elegant writer, "is more than the *mere loss of time*. Figure to yourself the loss that the year would sustain were the spring taken away : such a loss do they sustain who trifle in youth."

When there is so much to be done for individual improvement, in the formation of correct habits, and preparation for untried duty—so much for parents and benefactors, to pay even imperfectly the debt of gratitude—so much for broth-

ers, and sisters, and friends—so much for the poor, the uneducated, the afflicted—so much in obedience to Him who hath commanded us to “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling;” how unreasonable is it to do but little, and to do that little carelessly! how sinful to trifle away our time in light amusement, or profitless pursuit! It is no excuse for us, that others waste their days in desultory pleasures, or pass their youth without motive and without improvement. Every one must stand *alone* to give account at last. The example of an associate will not be accepted as a palliation, nor the habit of excuse, however it might have deceived men, justify us before a judge who readeth the intents of the heart.

The successful improvement of time, is aided by order in its distribution. A division of the day into parts, facilitates the successful discharge of its duties. Many of those who have become eminent in science and literature, have adhered to a systematick arrangement of time. King Alfred, who so remedied the defects of early education, as to gain distinction in the field of intellect, as well as in the annals of royalty, was an example of regularity. He divided the twenty-four hours into three equal portions. One of these periods of eight hours was devoted to the duties of religion, one to repose, recreation and literature, and the other to the cares of his realm. Sir William Jones, who acquired the knowledge of twenty-

eight languages, and whose attainments in all that ennobles man were such, that it was pronounced a "happiness to his race that he was born," persevered in a regular allotment of his time to particular occupations, and a scrupulous adherence to the distribution which he had established. Thus his great designs went on without confusion; and so convinced was he of the excellence of daily system, and so humble in the estimation of his native endowments, that to the inquiry how his wonderful attainments in every branch of knowledge had been made, he was accustomed to reply, *only by industry and regular application.*

Though the path of distinction in science and literature may not be the object of our ambition, yet in the sphere allotted to our sex, order and method are of essential importance. The assigning daily duty to particular hours, helps to ensure its performance. The system must often yield to circumstances, and be subject to interruptions, yet by keeping its general features steadily in view, more will be accomplished, and to better purpose than by desultory effort.

Consider every day, my dear young friends, as a sacred gift from the Author of your being. Divide it between the duties you owe to *Him*, to *yourselves*, and your *fellow-creatures*. Remember that you are held responsible at a higher tribunal than that of earth, for the manner in which they are discharged. Keep these three great departments before the eye of the mind. Proper-

tion the day between them, as the promised land was divided by lot among the chosen tribes. Consult those whom it is your duty to obey or to please, respecting the appropriation of hours to employments. Use discretion and kindness in not interfering with the convenience of those around, and then evince decision in not yielding to slight obstacles. When your system is once correctly established, let it be understood that it is not lightly to be set aside. When it must unavoidably yield, make use of it as an exercise of patience and gentleness.

With the first light of the morning say to your waking heart : "Behold another day, to be divided between the Giver, your own improvement, and the good of those with whom you are associated." Secure by early rising, those hours, when the frame is refreshed by repose, and the mind clear and vigorous with consciousness of renovated existence. Commence your day with devotion, the reading of the Scriptures, and meditation. As far as possible, let these sacred duties be in solitude and secrecy between yourself and your Maker. Raised by his hand from the helplessness of slumber, dependant on it for protection throughout the unknown changes of a day which may be your last on earth, let the young heart pour out its gratitude and hope, as living incense on the breath of the rising morn.

When the celebrated Boerhaave was inquired of, how he was able to acquire and to perform so

much, he answered : " It is my morning hour of prayer and meditation that gives me spirit and vigour during the labours of the day." He enjoined this practice on his friends, as one of the best rules in his power to give, conducive both to health of body, tranquillity of mind, and right conduct under the various allotments of providence. Were it necessary to multiply arguments, the example of the pious in all ages might be adduced to sanction the practice of hallowing the morning by devotion. The changes of the day, though it open with the smile of hope, are unknown. It may lead to unexpected trial. It may test the firmness of your soul by sudden prosperity. It may open the fountain of tears. It may summon you to that pale assembly, who have no longer any share in the things done under the sun. It will certainly bring you nearer to their narrow house. Take therefore with you a blessing, the solicited guidance of divine grace, the leadings of that pure spirit which can sustain the infirmities of our nature, and " what is dark, illumine ; what is low, raise and support."

The second division of the duties of the day regards *yourself*. Much is required of the young to fit themselves for respectability and usefulness in life. Much is required of our sex, in the present state of society, and by the spirit of an age rapidly advancing in improvement. Be true to every just expectation. Regard it as a privilege that much is expected of you. The care of your

health, the advance of your mind in knowledge by study and contemplation, dexterity and diligence in the varied circle of domestick employment, attention to such accomplishments as your station may require, the whole field of physical, mental and moral culture, which opens before her who is determined that her husbandry shall not be faithless, nor her harvest light, is too wide and diversified to admit of rules being given you by another, except the injunction that as far as is in your power, each portion should have its allotted period.

The third department of daily duty regards our *fellow-beings*. To be engrossed wholly by our own pursuits, creates selfishness. It is possible for the intellect to be cultivated at the expense of the heart. Therefore our obligations to those with whom we travel on "time's brief journey," should be clearly defined. This interchange aids in forming habits of disinterested kindness, and in preparing our nature for some of its most delightful affections. The duties which we owe to parents, benefactors, and teachers, claim a pre-eminent place in our regard. Though we may not hope to repay according to what we have received; let us not be deficient in any testimony of gratitude which it is in our power to render.

There is one virtue which I wish to recommend to your attention, my young friends, in which the present age has been pronounced deficient. I mean, *respect to the aged*. To "honour the hoary head, and rise up before the face of the old man,"

is a command of Jehovah. Those who have borne the burdens of life until strength has failed, in whose bosoms are treasures of experience to which we are strangers, whose virtues are confirmed beyond the fear of change or fluctuation, and who by the short space that divides their ripened piety from its reward, may be literally said to be "but a little lower than the angels," are surely worthy of the veneration of youth. Even when age is seen united with infirmity of purpose, or decay of those organs, through which the mind has been accustomed to act, it is entitled to tenderness from those who must themselves tread the same path of withered and wearied energies, unless they go down to an earlier grave. The aged are soothed by the marked respect of the young, and the tribute is graceful to those who render it.

Attention to brothers, sisters, and companions, culture of social feelings, punctuality in promises, kindness and courtesy to all, open an important and interesting sphere of action. Good offices to the poor, the uneducated, the afflicted, you will also as you have opportunity, comprehend within your social or relative department of duty.

Close the day by the same sacred services with which it commenced. Add also the exercise of self-examination. Compare the performances in each division of duty with the requisitions enforced in the morning. Inquire of the first allotted period, what hast thou done to render the *soul* more acceptable to pure eyes?—of the second,

what armour hast thou given the *mind* for life's warfare?—of the third, how hast thou aided the *heart* to advance the happiness of others? Let each hour bring its report. Marshalled under their respective leaders, bid them pass the review of conscience. May it be found that none have slumbered at their post, none broken their ranks, none deserted to the enemy. Something will be gathered from the tablet of the most faultless day—for regret. Something also for encouragement. Something for praise, to the Giver of “every good and perfect gift.”

One useful adjunct in this work of self-inspection is a Journal. It seems like the visible presence of a friend, whose frown makes folly ashamed, and whose smile gives confidence to virtue. It preserves what else might be forgotten, and plants way-marks and scatters mementoes, at every footstep of our pilgrimage. It gives an artificial length to life, by clothing the buried past in fresh and living imagery, and aiding us to retrace,

As in a map, the voyager his course,  
The windings of our way for many years.

Though in the seclusion of the domestick sphere, the course of passing events will usually be too monotonous to justify narration, yet the current of feeling and sentiment, the authors with whom we are conversant, and the reflections of a mind in search of knowledge and truth, will always furnish something worthy of memorial, so that “no



day need be without its line." If the habit of writing a Journal is commenced, it should be daily observed, as its interest declines with any irregularity. Like a true friend, it cannot bear neglect unmoved. Those who have tested its utility for years, have pronounced it a valuable assistant in fixing the eye of the mind on the never-staying flight of time, and in keeping vivid in the heart, the lessons taught by the discipline of Heaven. They have also supposed that they found benefit by copying in its pages, questions like the following, with their correspondent replies, and adopting them as rules of conduct :—

1. Will you endeavour to establish a daily systematick division of time, with a view to improvement ?

2. Will you ask the concurrence of those whose wishes and convenience you are bound to consult ?

3. Will you not unnecessarily recede from your system, nor renounce it in despair because it is often interrupted ?

4. At what hour will you rise ?

5. How much time will you allow to the sacred duties of the morning ?

6. What part of the day will you devote to the careful perusal of books for the attainment of useful knowledge ?

7. What period will you allot to the needle, and the various departments of domestick industry ?

8. What part to healthful exercise, accomplishments and recreation ?

9. What part to the comfort of relatives, friends and the family circle ?

10. What period to the relief of poverty, affliction and ignorance ?

11. At what hour will you retire to repose ?

12. Will you close the day by religious exercises, and a careful retrospect of its several hours and duties ?

Perseverance in such a course will render the remembrance of your days delightful, and give to your life a diadem of beauty, and a crown of wisdom. Do not relinquish your attempts to realize the value of time, until you have learned to estimate its smaller portions. *An hour* faithfully improved may accomplish much. It was a rule of the excellent Bishop Taylor, that at the striking of every clock, we should enter with renewed vigour upon the appropriate duty of the new hour, and lift up the heart for God's assistance and blessing. The philosopher was wise who affixed to his study-door the inscription, "Time is my estate. If I lose *an hour* how shall I repay the debt ?" In the science of economy, the sage Franklin enjoined the *care of half pence*. In a system of thorough improvement of time, the *care of half hours*, is equally essential. With respect to many of the other gifts of Heaven, our perception is quick, and our attachment ardent. We prize beauty because it charms the eye, though it fades like the summer-rose ; wealth, because it purchases the things that we call good, though they perish in the using ;

reputation, because the consciousness of it is pleasant, though a breath may blast it; let us not then forget to value above all these possessions—*time*, which may be so improved as to purchase the bliss of eternity.

“Great God!” says the eloquent Massillon, “for what purpose dost thou leave us here on earth, but to render ourselves worthy of thine eternal inheritance! Every thing that we do for the world shall perish with it, whatsoever we do for thee shall be immortal. And what shall we say to thee, on the bed of death, when thou shalt enter into judgment with us, and demand an account of the time which thou didst grant to be employed in glorifying and serving thee? Shall we say, we have had friends to boast of on earth, but have acquired none to ourselves in heaven; we have made every exertion to please men, and none to please the Almighty? And shall it be written upon our lives—*time lost for eternity.*”

## LETTER II.

### RELIGION.

IN the education of the young, one of our first inquiries should be, what pursuits are the most indispensable, and what attainments best adapted to their probable sphere of action. In estimating the sciences, we take into view, both their present utility, and their future gain. The most assiduous attention should be allotted to those, which will be most imperatively demanded. We persevere in teaching a child to speak, to read, and to write his native language—because through these mediums alone, is he to acquire and communicate ideas.

The relative value of attainments is affected by the different stages and conditions of human life. Those are held most valuable, which extend their influence over the greatest space of time. Some accomplishments are adapted to the season of youth, and with it pass away. These possess a fugitive value, when compared with the whole extent of life. They are like the tint upon the blossom, which fades that the fruit may ripen.

Some acquisitions depend on the perfection of the senses. Their standard of value, must be also fluctuating. Where is the exquisite skill of the en-

graver—or the delicate touch of the miniature-painter—when the eye grows dim? Where is the power of the master of sweet sounds, when the harp of the ear is broken?—or of the constructor of delicate mechanism, when the hand is paralyzed?—or of the orator, when the valve of the lungs plays no more at the bidding of eloquent thought?

It would seem that the purely intellectual sciences might possess a more inherent value. Partaking of the nature of the mind, they are less dependant on the changes of material things. But memory, the keeper of all knowledge, is subject to accident. Disease may impair its tenacity, or age destroy it.

Is there then any science, which is attainable at every period of life—and available till its close? whose processes are not disturbed though the eye withdraw its light—or the ear its counsel—or the right hand its cunning—or the tongue its musick? whose results are not confused when age gropes in the mazes of doubt and imbecility? whose treasures are not lost, though time, turning as a robber upon memory, strews the fine gold of its casket on the winds?

I knew a man, distinguished alike by native talent, and classical acquisition. In his boyhood, he loved knowledge, and the teachers of knowledge. He selected that profession which taxes intellect with the most severity, and became eminent both in the theory and practice of jurispru

dence. While manhood, and the hopes of ambition, and the joys of affection were fresh about him, disease attacked him, by its fearful ministers of paralysis and blindness. So he lived for years, without the power of motion, or the blessing of sight. Among those whom he had served, counselled and commanded, he was but a broken vessel. Yet light shone inwardly, without a cloud. A science, which in youth he had cultivated, continued its active operations, though the "eye was dim, and the natural force abated." Communicating power of endurance, and opening sources of profitable contemplation—it brought a cheerful smile to the brow of that sufferer, who, sightless and motionless on his bed, was counted by the unreflecting, but as a wreck of humanity. And this science was religion.

There was a man who had won eminence in the ranks of fame, and whom his country delighted to honour. Ennobled both by erudition and integrity, he had walked on the high places of the earth, "without spot, and blameless." I saw him, when almost a hundred winters had past over him. Like the aged Gileadite, he was able no longer to hear the "voice of singing-men, or of singing-women." The beautiful residence which his own taste had ornamented, spread its charms to an unconscious owner. The rose and the vine-flower breathed their fragrance for others, and the flocks in his green pastures, once his delight, roamed unheeded.

I bore him a message of love from a friend of early days, who had stood with him among statesmen, when the nation was in jeopardy, and when mutual danger, draws more closely the bonds of affection. But the links of friendship, once interwoven with the essence of his being, were sundered. Between the recollections that I fain would have restored, and the speech that clothed them, there was a "great gulf fixed." Both the name and image of the cherished companion had fled for ever.

A vase of massy silver was brought forth, on which his country had caused to be sculptured, the record of his services, and of her gratitude. He gazed vacantly upon it. No chord of association vibrated. The love of honourable distinction, so long burning like a perpetual incense-flame on the altar of a great mind, had forsaken its temple. I felt a tear start at the humbling thought, that of all he had gotten, nothing remained. At parting, something was mentioned of the Deity, the beneficent Father of us all. Those lips, hitherto so immoveable, trembled. The cold, blue eye sparkled, as through frost. The thin, bloodless hand clasped mine, as he uttered with a startling energy :—

"When by the whelming tempest borne,  
High o'er the broken wave,  
I knew thou wert not slow to hear,  
Nor impotent to save."

And as I slowly passed down the avenue from

that patriarchial mansion, I heard his voice lifted in prayer, and learned that its spirit might survive—even when the endowments of a mighty intellect, and the precious consciousness of a pure renown, were alike effaced from the tablet of remembrance.

Among those who serve at God's altar, was one, who had faithfully discharged through a long life, the holy duties of his vocation. He lingered after his contemporaries had gone to rest. By the fireside of his only son, he sat in peaceful dignity, and the children of another generation loved his silver locks. In that quiet recess, memory was lulled to sleep. The names of even familiar things, and the images held most indelible, faded as a dream. Still he lived on—cheered by that reverence which is due to the “hoary head, when found in the way of righteousness.” At length, his vigour failed. The staff could no longer support his tottering steps, and nature tended to her last repose.

It was attempted by the repetition of his own name, to awaken the torpor of memory. But he replied, “*I know not the man.*” Mention was made of his only son, the idol of his early years, whose filial gratitude had taken every form and office of affection: “*I have no son.*” The tender epithet by which he had designated his favourite grandchild was repeated: “*I have no little darling.*” Among the group of friends who surrounded his bed, there was one who spoke of the



Redeemer of man. The aged suddenly raised himself upon his pillow. His eye kindled, as when from the pulpit, in the vigour of his days, he had addressed an audience whom he loved. *"I remember that Saviour. Yes—I do remember the Lord Jesus Christ."*

There seems then to be a science which survives when the body is powerless—and age sweeps away the hoarded gems of learning and the emblems of fame : which prolongs enjoyment when memory has departed, and when those affections which are the first to quicken, and the last to decay, become as cold clay about the heart-strings.

Perceiving that adversity happens to all, the young would naturally inquire, if there is any science which fortifies against it, or furnishes armour to resist its shock. For those transitions from wealth to poverty, which sometimes overtake the wisest, philosophy proposes an antidote. The ancient teachers of heathen wisdom offered as a substitute for the goods of fortune, moderated desires, and pleasures founded in virtue. The Stoics advocated the impracticable theory, that the soul should be unaffected by all the mutations of earth. Some of the philosophers of ancient Greece soared as high as man's wisdom can hope to reach, without the aid of Inspiration. They counselled man to rise in the majesty of his nature, above material things. But they took not into account that latent infirmity, by which, when

"he would do good, evil was present with him." Their system was like the cold moonbeam, fading before the day-star from on high. It was wholly inadequate to sustain, under those severer trials, the loss of friends, and the darkness that enwraps the grave. It lay crushed at the tomb, where the mourner left his fondest affections, or stood appalled and silent, when the dying passed the threshold of Eternity.

It is reserved for a "better covenant," to lead the desolated heart, not to "sorrow as without hope." With what a burst of despair does Quintilian exclaim, after the death of his wife and children: "All that I now possess, is for aliens, and no longer mine. Henceforth, my wealth and my writings, the fruits of a long and painful life, must be reserved only for strangers."

The bereaved, and eloquent son of the American forests, inquires in agony, "Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one. There runs not a drop of my blood, in the veins of any living creature."

The Idumean, when the destroying angel had made "desolate all his company,"—acknowledged, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: *blessed be the name of the Lord.*" His grieved heart bemoaned not his heirless wealth, his untransmitted renown—his desolated home—but turning to the First Unerring Cause, praised the mercy, which, though concealed in the blackness of darkness, was mercy still. It is surely a divine

alchemy, which presents, like gold from the refiner's crucible, the spirit purified by the fires that dissolved it.

A faith, more perfect than the lore which Greek or Roman taught, is requisite to console the bereaved parent, who taking in his arms his most cherished idols, bears them, one after the other, through the dark valley of the shadow of death. "Yesterday, I saw the brittle broken :—to day, I see the mortal dead," said Epictetus to the woman, who one evening regretted her broken vase, and the next, wept for her lifeless son. But he was unable to assure her, "Thy dead shall arise again."—"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me," said the King of Israel, over the form of his lifeless infant. "My children are all dead; there is not one now, to stand between me and my God," said a Christian-mother of our own times, as she turned in sainted meekness to her lonely duties.

But if heathen philosophy failed to sooth the mourner, to the dying, she was still more emphatically, "a physician of no value." She might supply the pride, or excuse the weakness, with which her votaries rushed upon the dagger's point, when life was joyless. But to which of them could she vouchsafe that sweet and holy confidence, with which the departing Hooker exclaimed: "By God's grace, I have loved him in my youth, and feared him in my age, and laboured to have a conscience void of offence, towards him and towards all men."

And now, cherished and lovely beings, just commencing to ascend the hill of life, looking around you, like timid and beautiful strangers, for the greenest paths, or the most approved guides on your devious pilgrimage, if there was a science capable of imparting unbounded happiness, and of continuing that happiness, when age disqualifies the mind for other researches—a science which surmounts that grave, where all earthly glory lays down its laurel, and fixes a firm grasp on heaven, when earth recedes, how must she be pitied who neglects its acquisition. And there is such a science. And there is peril in disregarding it. Truly impressive were the words of Queen Elizabeth's secretary of state, to the bishops who surrounded his death-bed: "Ah! how great a pity, that we men should not feel for what end we are born into this world, till we are just on the point of quitting it."

If there were a book, that astonished both by its wisdom and its antiquity—that delighted alike by history, oratory and poetry—in theory and illustration, equally simple and sublime, yielding to the comprehension of the unlearned, yet revealing to the critick, the finger of Deity—a book which the wise have pronounced superior to all beside, and the learned retained for daily study when all others were dismissed—how anxious should we be to obtain it, how impatient to be made acquainted with its contents. And there is such a book. And for want of the knowledge of

it, how many regions of the earth, are but the "habitations of cruelty."—"More wisdom, comfort, and pleasure, are to be found in retiring and turning your heart from the world, and reading with the good Spirit of God, his sacred Word, than in all the courts and all the favours of princes," said one, who had enjoyed the pomp and distinction of a court.

If there were a day, when it was lawful to turn from all labour, vanity and care—to take home to the heart, only those images which make it better—and to associate in spirit not only with the good of all ages, but with cherubim and seraphim around the Throne—should we not hail its approach amid the weariness of life? And there is such a day. The pious greet it, as a foretaste of heaven's rest. The wise have pronounced its influence propitious, even upon their temporal concerns. "I have found," says Sir Matthew Hale, "by strict and diligent observation, that a due observance of the duties of the Sabbath, hath ever brought with it a blessing on the rest of my time, and the week so begun hath been prosperous unto me."

If there was a friend, whose sympathies never slumbered, whose judgment never erred, whose power had no limit—a friend acquainted with all our wants, and able to supply them—with our secret sorrows, and ready to relieve them—should we not be urgent to seek his presence, and grateful to express our desires? And there is such a friend—such a mode of access? "Eighty-and

six years, have I served him," said the venerable Polycarp, "and he hath never done me aught but good."—"All things forsake me, except my God, my duty, and my prayers," said the noble statesman, whose long life comprehended the reign of five sovereigns of England, and whose career had been dignified by the honours which are coveted among men.

It would be easy to multiply suffrages in favour of religion, from those who have been illustrious in the paths of science, as well as upon the heights of power. The learned Selden, whose attainments were so various and profound, that he was sometimes called the "living dictionary" remarks, at the close of life : "I have taken pains to know every thing esteemed worth knowing among men, yet of all my disquisitions and readings, nothing now remains to comfort me, but this passage of St. Paul, 'It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.'"—"Our religion," says the clear-minded Pascal, "awing those whom it justifies, and comforting those whom it reproveth, so wisely tempereth hope with fear, that it abases us infinitely more than unassisted reason could do, yet without driving us to despair, while it exalts us infinitely more than the pride of our nature could do—yet without rendering us vain." We gather collateral testimony, even from heathen lore. Seneca admonishes us, that "were it not for heavenly contemplations, it had

not been worth our while to have come into this world."

We cannot but feel that we are beings of a two-fold nature—that our journey to the tomb is short, and the existence beyond it immortal. Is there any attainment that we may reserve, when we lay down the body? We know, that of the gold which perishes, we may take none with us, when dust returneth to dust. Of the treasures which the mind accumulates, may we carry aught with us, to that bourne, whence no traveller returns?

We may have been delighted with the studies of Nature, and penetrated into those caverns, where she perfects her chymistry in secret. Composing and decomposing—changing matter into nameless forms—pursuing the subtlest essences through the air, and resolving even that air into its original elements—what will be the gain, when we pass from material to immaterial, and this great museum and laboratory, the time-worn earth, shall dissolve in its own central fires?

We may have become adepts in the physiology of man—scanning the mechanism of the eye, till light itself unfolded its invisible laws—of the ear, till its most hidden reticulations confessed their mysterious agency with sound—of the heart, till that citadel of life revealed its hermit-policy: but will these researches be available, in a state of being, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard—nor the heart of man conceived?"

Will he who fathoms the waters, and computes

their pressure and power, have need of this skill, "where there is no more sea?" Will the mathematician exercise the lore, by which he measured the heavens—or the astronomer, the science which discovered the stars, when called to go beyond their light?

Those who have penetrated most deeply into the intellectual structure of man, lifted the curtain from the birthplace of thought, traced the springs of action to their fountain, and thrown the veiled and shrinking motive into the crucible, perceive the object of their study, taking a new form, entering disembodied an unknown state of existence, and receiving powers adapted to its laws, and modes of intercourse.

We have no proof that the sciences, to which years of labour have been devoted, will survive the tomb. But the impressions they have made—the dispositions they have nurtured—the good or evil, they have helped to stamp upon the soul—will go with it into Eternity. The adoring awe, the deep humility, inspired by the study of the planets and their laws—the love of truth, which he cherished, who pursued the science that demonstrates it—will find a response among angels and archangels. The praise that was learned amid the melodies of nature—or from the lyre of consecrated genius—may pour its perfected tones from a seraph's harp. The goodness taught in the whole frame of Creation—by the flower lifting its honey-cup to the insect, and the leaf drawing its green



curtain round the nursing-chamber of the smallest bird ; by the pure stream, refreshing both the grass and the flocks that feed on it, the tree, and the master of its fruits ; the tender charity caught from the happiness of the humblest creature—will be at home in His presence, who hath pronounced himself the “ God of love.”

The studies, therefore, which we pursue, as the means of intellectual delight, or the instruments of acquiring wealth and honour among men, are valuable at the close of life, only as they have promoted those dispositions which constitute the bliss of an unending existence. Tested by its tendencies beyond the grave, Religion in its bearings and results, transcends all other sciences. The knowledge which it imparts does not perish with the stroke which disunites the body, from its ethereal companion. While its precepts lead to the highest improvement of this state of probation, its spirit is congenial with that ineffable reward to which we aspire. It is the preparation for immortality, which should be daily and hourly wrought out, amid all the mutations of time.

Viewing it only with reference to the present life, we perceive its requirements to be privileges. The day that it hallows—the volume that it gives as our rule of conduct—the prayerful intercourse with heaven that it enjoins—the deep penitence—the fervent trust in a pure and prompting spirit—the self-denial that it imposes on the wayward and vengeful passions—its monitions of earth’s empti

ness—its solace under affliction—the chastened meekness of its lessons in prosperity—the tender and forbearing love which from a Redeemer's example it instils into the heart—tend to renovate, to fortify, to sublimiate the weakness of our nature, and to make it “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Feel it, therefore, my dear young friends, to be your *duty* to be religious. If you acknowledge the sacred obligation to “obey your parents,” do you not owe equal obedience to that Father in heaven, whose command is, “give me thine heart?” It is of immense importance that religion be secured in youth. Those years which so easily take stamp and colouring from surrounding objects, impress their own likeness upon a series of other years. They may determine the character through life, and the destinies of Eternity.

Suffer me therefore, to say to those who are in the fair blossom of their being, that they are unsafe while they neglect the guidance of religion. Seek her, sweet friends, with prayer, amid the hush and holiness of morn, and at eve recall the day's deeds, and measure them by her standard, and weigh its words and thoughts in her equal balance.

Make that religion, which regulates the heart, a constant companion. It has been an error to suppose it should be reserved for the higher and more trying exigencies of life. Though able to sustain under the greatest extremity, it is equally

willing to walk in the humblest paths. If it wear a brighter robe on the Sabbath, it is still girded for the service of every day, and ready to take its station by their side, who invoke its aid. It is like a thread of gold, which may be continually woven into the web of life. If its clew be laid aside, except on Sundays, or seasons of prayer, it will be difficult to resume. It may be either so entangled, or broken, or tarnished, that the tissue will be unfit for heaven.

While you are in the pursuit of piety, do not listen to its teachers, in the spirit of criticism, but reverently and with meekness. Let it not be your aim, to become a sectarian, but a Christian. Avoid every feature of bigotry—every temptation to polemical controversy. Never dispute about doctrines, or condemn those who may differ from you. Leave the defence of tenets to those whom Christendom has appointed the champions of her faith. It is more fitting for our sex, to be the gentle guardians of the peace and charity of the Gospel. Their piety who were last at the cross, and first at the sepulchre, should be to cultivate the meekness of self-denial and the fervour of faith. Receiving the “truth in love,” remember that every sect has produced both good and evil—that all build the foundation of their belief on the same book, and place the goal of their hope at the gate of the same heaven. Praying that through different roads, every true worshipper, may arrive at one glorious inheritance, occupy yourselves less

in scanning the infirmities of others, than in correcting your own. Take home to your heart, the words of the pious King Henry, at the death bed of Cardinal Beaufort: "Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all." Choose not to excel in the knowledge of controverted points—or to convince by pungency of argument—or to bewilder by fluency of speech—but simply to persuade through the "beauty of holiness."

Endeavour that the distinguishing feature of your piety, should be that love which the Redeemer marked when on earth, as the test of discipleship, and in which the primitive Christians wrapped themselves as a garment, when they went from persecution to martyrdom, from "prison unto death." Cultivate this spirit in your deportment and let it beam from your countenance. There is no hazard in such emulation. "The desire of power in excess," says Lord Bacon, "caused angels to fall; the desire of knowledge in excess, caused man to fall; but in charity, there is no excess—neither man nor angel can be endangered by it."

Religion need not be disjoined from the innocent pleasures of life. Its province is to heighten happiness, as well as to sustain toil, or to sanctify affliction. To confine it to seasons of lonely meditation, or disrobe it of its angel-smile, is a monastic error. Give it place by the hearth-stone, and in the walk among the flowers, where heart answers to heart. Let it have part in the music

that cheers the domestick circle, and in the fond intercourse of sisterly and fraternal love.

And now, if I have urgently or diffusely incited the young to the pursuit of the most excellent, most enduring science, it is because in the book of divine truth, I have seen the pledge of Omnipotence, that those who "seek early shall find it;" because I have believed, that in the docility of their happy season, there was an aptitude for its rudiments which time and change might take away.

### LETTER III.

#### KNOWLEDGE.

KNOWLEDGE is valuable for the pleasure it imparts, for the permanent wealth it secures, and for its ennobling influence on the mind. Its excellence is more strongly illustrated by contrasting it with ignorance.

"The ignorant man," says an Arabian writer, "is dead, even while he walketh upon earth:—numbered with the living, he existeth not." The strong prejudices, and restricted trains of thought, which are common to an unfurnished mind, are obvious to all who come in contact with it. Rude manners, and contempt of just laws, distinguish an uneducated community.—"Learning," says Lord Bacon, "doth make the mind gentle, generous, and pliant to government, while ignorance leaveth it churlish, thwarting, and mutinous; and the evidence of history doth clear this assertion, inasmuch as the most barbarous and unlearned times have been the most subject to tumults, seditions, and changes."

The treasures of knowledge have been pronounced, by the wise of all ages, infinitely superior to the "gold that perisheth." They display their

superiority by their power of resisting accident, and of adhering to their possessor when all things else forsake him. The winds cannot sweep them away, nor the flames dissolve, nor the floods devour them.—“*All that I have is about me,*” said the poet Simonides, with perfect calmness, when, in the midst of tempest and shipwreck, his companions were loading themselves with their most costly effects, ere they plunged into the deep.—Treasures over which the elements can have no power, are surely worth the labour of those who “dwell in houses of clay.”

The error is sometimes committed of estimating knowledge, principally as the instrument of pecuniary gain. Those who hold this opinion, degrade its excellence. They debase its specific gravity. Such mercenary worshippers are like money-changers in a sacred and magnificent temple. Its presiding deity sanctions neither their traffick or their currency. Knowledge sought with such motives will hardly reveal itself in its depth and grandeur. Ere the imperial purple of Rome was sold for money, its glory had departed. What ennobles the intellect, confers a distinction, which silver and gold can never purchase. The learned Erasmus maintained this theory, when he assigned as a reason for refusing a lucrative office, “I will not be hindered from prosecuting my studies, by all the gold in the world.”

Considering knowledge, therefore, as an inalienable possession, which scorns to be exchanged for

“jewels of fine gold,” let us trace its effect upon the intellect that acquires it. We perceive that it imparts strength and dignity, that while it enriches the casket, it enlarges its capacity. It gives ability to weigh, to compare, to decide, and a mind accustomed to such labours, expands and consolidates its powers, as a frame inured to healthful exercise becomes vigorous and elastick. In cases of doubt or difficulty, collecting the concentrated experience of past ages, it comes forth to act as a counsellor. To use the words of a most competent judge, “those who are illuminated by learning, do find it whispering ever more in their ears, when other counsellors stand mute and silent.”

This argument peculiarly recommends it to the attention of the young. A time must come when the voice of the parent-guide will be silent in the grave ; when the pupil must pass from under the shelter of tutelage to the toils and responsibilities of life. Then it will often be necessary to decide without advice, and to act without precedent.—Judgment laying aside her leading-strings, must dare the steep and slippery ascent, biding both the buffet and the blast. Then, the stores of a well-balanced, well-furnished mind will be put in requisition, and the mistakes of ignorance and vanity be happily avoided.

Knowledge opens sources of delightful contemplation for domestick retirement. This renders it a peculiar protection to the young. In their fond-



ness for promiscuous society, they are often in danger of forming indiscreet associations, or rash attachments. Knowledge makes home pleasant, and self-communion no solitude. "When I am alone, it talks with me, so that I have no need to go abroad, and solicit amusement from others," said the philosopher Antisthenes. This lineament of knowledge, strongly recommends it to our own sex, my dear young friends. For home is our province—and it is our imperative duty to strive to render it agreeable; and as we are never more disposed to be amiable, than when we are happy, we shall probably best succeed in imparting felicity, when we most enjoy it ourselves.

Knowledge is also desirable to our sex, as an antidote to the narrowness of mind, which grows out of minute details and petty cares. It makes us intelligent companions, by supplying varied and improving subjects of conversation. It creates a class of independent enjoyments. From the structure of society, as well as from physical weakness, we are compelled to rely on the ministry of many agents. By some of these we may be ill-served, and by others deceived: it is therefore important to cultivate self-derived and self-sustained satisfactions. For us, whose strongest affections are in the keeping of others, it is well to secure some intellectual solace, ere the props on which those affections rest, chance to warp, to pierce us, or to pass away. And next to the support of that hope which has no rooting in earth,

and in close affinity with it, are the consolations of a well-disciplined, contemplative mind !

In our age of the world, knowledge seems requisite to gain and to preserve respect. Adulation is the food of the young and beautiful, but maturity requires stronger aliment. Nectar and ambrosia vanish with the brief goddesship of beauty, and she who feels the burdens of life, in their dense and uncompromising reality, will gladly accept a more substantial nourishment. In order to be upheld by the respect of him, whose name she bears, and by that of the household which she is appointed to govern—it is necessary that she should not disgrace them by ignorance. There was a period, when humble industry, and virtuous example, were all that society demanded of woman. That period is past. Education, in conferring new privileges, erected a tribunal, where each recipient is summoned to “give account of her stewardship.” The very children of the log-cottages throughout our land, obey the injunction of one of its departed politicians, and “make a crusade against ignorance.”

More than a century and a half since, when intellectual culture was dealt out with a sparing hand, the importance of knowledge to the respectability and happiness of our sex, was clearly foreseen and stated by a female writer. Miss Ann Baynard, a native of our mother-country, asserted that it was “*sin to be contented with a little knowledge.*” Laboriously exemplifying her own

precept, she acquired the ancient languages, astronomy, mathematicks and philosophy. The motives which she assigned for perfecting herself in Greek, was, the pleasure of reading Chrysostom, in his native purity. Her Latin compositions were applauded for their elegance, by the criticks of the day. She made advances in other sciences, particularly in metaphysicks. Yet her life comprised only twenty-five years. Though such attainments were in those days far more conspicuous than they would be in our own, there was about her no pride of science. In her deportment, she was simple and meek—benevolent to the poor, and of sincere piety. She evinced the natural alliance between profound knowledge and humility. On her death-bed, she requested her clergyman to incite all the youth of his charge, to the pursuit of learning and wisdom, as the means of durable happiness. “Would women,” she writes, “but spend half of that time in study and thinking, which they do, in visiting, vanity and folly, it would induce composure of mind, and lay a basis for wisdom and knowledge, by which they might be far better enabled to serve God, and to help their neighbours.”

A similar testimony was given in still earlier times, by Margaret, the mother of King Henry VII., who to the possession of learning added its munificent patronage. She was the founder of two colleges, connected with the University of Cambridge—read and wrote with facility in the

Latin and French languages—and collected a library, both valuable and extensive for those times.

But those who have it not in their power to encourage learning by liberal donations, or even to devote any important portion of their lives to study, may still be so convinced of the value of a good education, as to consider no labour too great to obtain it. Though our favoured age furnishes unprecedented opportunities for this result, yet they will be found insufficient, without vigorous effort. All the aids of affluence, and the incitements of parental love, will be powerless without persevering study. If the physician pronounces the voluntary co-operation of his patient, essential to the perfect effect of medicine, how much more necessary is mental regimen, to the great object of correct education? It will be in vain, that books, initiating into the various sciences, have proceeded from our most powerful pens—that minds of the highest talent bow to the business of instruction—unless those who acquire knowledge, are willing to incur the labour of profound thought. Elementary principles must be committed by patient repetition, and trains of thought deepened by habits of reflection. It is not in the unbroken surface of sloth, or among the weeds of a roving intellect, that knowledge deigns to deposite those seeds, whose well-ripened fruits are for the winter of life. Severe and tireless application is the currency in the realm of learning. And to pursue

the metaphor, memory is the mint, where this coinage receives its impression.

If we believe with Plato, that "all knowledge is but remembrance," we cannot take too much pains to strengthen the retentive power. Without it, there can be no imperishable mental wealth. If any young person says with sincerity, "I have no memory," she pronounces herself a vassal in the empire of mind. If she makes this avowal carelessly, or without compunction, she deserves to be for ever a "hewer of wood and a drawer of water," among those whom knowledge ennobles. But a weak memory, or what is colloquially called "no memory at all," will yet reveal a principle of vitality, sufficient to justify and repay assiduous nursing-care. For if memory has been philosophically analyzed into the element of "fixed attention," it would seem to be within the reach of all, who have power over their own perceptions. So it undoubtedly is—but not without perseverance.

When you read, what it is desirable to retain, dismiss every extraneous thought. If this cannot be done in the company of others, become a silent and separate student. Let your first requisitions on memory be short, but thorough, repeated daily, and as far as possible, at the same period of the day. Every night, review deliberately and clearly what has been gained. At the close of every week, abridge in writing, the subjects that you deem most valuable. At the close of every month, recapitulate, select and arrange, from this record,

the most important parts, and write them neatly in a book kept for that purpose—but not in the language of the author; and if possible, without reference to him at all. Let this be a repository of condensed knowledge, the pure gold of thought. Select from it, fitting subjects for conversation, and view knowledge in all its aspects, ere you commit it irrevocably to the casket of the soul.

Such a process cannot be continued faithfully for a year, without perceptible benefit to memory. Command its services freely, as a monarch does those of a loyal subject. Never allow yourself to say, without self-reproach, “I have forgotten.” If memory is under your control, why should you forget? If it is not, whose is the fault? Even a child is in danger, who says “I forgot,” and feels no shame.

In your earliest discipline of memory, be careful not to afford it too many aids. Its journey up the cliff of knowledge may be painful, and its requisitions among the duties of life, will be surely severe. Make it athletick by exercise, like the son of a peasant. Bring home the substance of sermons, or lectures on the sciences, without the aid of pencil and paper. If you wish to preserve it for others, abridge it after you return home, but never take notes while you listen. It too much excuses memory from its trust. In perusing books, never use marks, to denote the stages of your progress. If the contents are not sufficiently striking to furnish a clew for recalling

the mind, charge memory with the number of the chapter, or the page where you discontinued to read. If neither the spirit, style, or numerical adjuncts of the book, can be so clearly restored, as to designate the point at which you left it, what benefit do you propose, from proceeding in its perusal? It is much reading without proper attention—it is miscellaneous aliment without digestion, that paralyze memory, and induce morbid habits of mind. Hold no rule in slight estimation, that will enable you to invigorate the retentive power. Persevere in this regimen, until you are familiar with the intense delight of knowledge won by toil. Then you may be assured that the most formidable stage in the discipline of memory is surmounted; for as it regards the action of the mind, knowledge and remembrance are indivisible. Would that I could convince all my fair, young readers, of the value of perseverance. Its importance to our own sex, has seldom been more strikingly exemplified than in the instance of Miss Elizabeth Carter. She early formed a resolution of acquiring a learned education. To overcome existing obstacles, she was scarcely outdone by Demosthenes, in untiring effort. Nature opposed her design. Her infancy and early youth, gave no indication of the eminence that she afterward obtained. Her perceptions were unusually slow. The rudiments of science were acquired with incredible labour. She had a continual tendency to fall asleep, whenever she attempted mental applica-

tion. The obtuseness of comprehension with which she encountered the impediments that oppose entrance into the dead languages, exhausted the patience of even her excellent father. He besought her to give up all ambition of becoming a scholar. But nothing could shake her perseverance. And its victory was complete. What she once gained, she never lost. The severe labour to which she submitted, earned this recompense, which quickness of perception seldom attains.

She early acquired the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages. The first, she continued to read daily, even in extreme old age. Of the second, her knowledge was critically correct, as her translation of Epictetus proves. Dr. Johnson, in speaking of a celebrated scholar, said, he understood Greek better than any one whom he had ever known, except Elizabeth Carter. The French language, she understood thoroughly, and spoke with fluency. Italian, Spanish, and German, she taught herself without assistance. From the last, she received very high enjoyment. Portuguese and Arabick, she also added. For her own use, she constructed an Arabick dictionary, containing various explanations, and combinations of words, which she perceived, from her own reading, to have been misconceived, or ill-translated. To her uncommon proficiency in classick and historick lore, she united a knowledge of astronomy and ancient geography, poetry and theology. The Holy Scriptures were her daily and delightful study.



Though her attainments were viewed with wonder, and gained her the friendship of some of the best and most talented in her native realm, she sought not to possess learning for the purposes of display. Her long life of meekness and piety, spoke a far different language.

No stronger example can be adduced of the force and value of perseverance. Those of our own sex, whose taste would not lead them to the acquisition of difficult languages, or to a life of science and contemplation, will find this excellent virtue equally prevalent, in any other modification of duty, or channel of pursuit.

Want of fixedness of purpose, is but too generally a fault of the young. Indeed, to so many employments, are the minds of young ladies directed, that it is exceedingly difficult to preserve unity of design. But of one thing, they should never lose sight; the danger of neglecting to improve to the utmost, the priceless privileges of their season of life. Then, the mind comes forth in freshness and beauty. Cares have not pre-occupied it—nor contradictory trains of thought stamped upon it a desultory character. “It turneth as wax to the seal.” How often, ere we understand the worth of this pliancy, does rigidity steal over the fibres of thought, and the buddings of character take a determinate form, and we are young no more.

It was Cato the censor, who having imperfectly estimated this precious season, awoke to a late

repentance, and at the age of sixty desired again to become a scholar, and to study Greek. The habit sometimes formed by young persons, of excusing their deficiencies on the plea of *want of time*, is detrimental to improvement. Time ought to be found for every important requisition. The same management that secures it for amusement, will secure it for study. When any effort involving labour is proposed, few will allege want of inclination, but many will shelter themselves under the broad banner of want of time. "*I had no time*," may be considered as the knell of excellence. The great and the good, find time for all that appertains to greatness or goodness. "I will hear thee at a more convenient season," said the Roman, to the warning Apostle, when at his pungent arguments, conscience trembled. The Inspired Volume does not inform us, whether that convenient season ever came. What the "convenient season" was, to the lost soul, is the "no time" to the negligent student. It is a barrier thrown up, to keep others from the truth, and herself from wisdom. It is the dialect which indolence borrows, when she is ashamed of her own.

As our highest privileges are not exempt from abuse, the very redundancy of benefits which the present age lavishes upon our sex, involves danger. The change has been sudden. The flood of light burst upon the eye, ere it had been gradually led from surrounding darkness. Our grandmothers had only the simple training which suffices for

"household-good." Our grand-daughters may have an opportunity of becoming professors. When we have learned to meet deliberately this influx of intellectual prosperity—and each fluctuating element has subsided to its true level, it will be found that sufficient time is not allowed to complete the process. Why should not the period be equal to that allotted to the other sex? Is it not important that a broad foundation be laid by those from whom so much is expected? and who have the character of sowing the seeds of most of the good and evil which exist in the world? To a young lady, whose regular period of study terminates with the first fifteen or sixteen years of life, there "remaineth still, very much land to be possessed." Yet how is she to become its possessor, when the novelties of fashionable amusement, and the cares of woman's lot, stand in array against her more formidably than the "Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites," whom the children of Israel attacked, but were never able wholly to subdue.

The system pursued in our mother-country is more rational. The space allotted to education is longer, and not interrupted by promiscuous visiting, or exciting amusement.\* It is both reckless and cruel, for those who guide the young, to expose them to the fascinations of gay society, during the years allotted to scholastick study. A period originally too brief for the great work which is to be achieved, is thus rendered still more insufficient.

The imagination is occupied by extraneous imagery, and the mind exposed to gilded and profitless reveries, when it should be girded up for faithful and patient labour.

The social principle, which, throughout life, deserves and rewards culture, cannot so safely expand, during the season of school-education, as in the company of those engaged in similar pursuits, or of those still older and wiser friends, who know how to blend instruction with delight. Unless that narrow span which is set apart by the community as sacred to education, be zealously guarded for the young by those who love them, how can they escape an irremediable loss? They may indeed acquire the reputation of knowledge without possessing it. But are they willing to shelter themselves under false devices, to incur the perpetual labour of wearing a mask, and the hazard of detection? Ignorance is always obvious to the eye of a true scholar, however it may entrench itself in cunning devices. The invention of eking out the lion's skin with the fox's, though an ancient and classical artifice, is not wise. Least of all, is it fitting in woman, whose sweetest graces are simplicity and purity. Let the young be assured, that for whatever toil or privation they sustain, knowledge hath a surpassing payment of present pleasure and of future gain. When like her, who some three centuries since, preferred at the age of sixteen, solitude and Plato, to the haunts of fashionable gayety—they taste the true sweetness

of knowledge—they will pronounce the period appropriated to its attainment, as the most privileged part of their existence.

The sentiment that education is complete, when school-days are past, is too plainly erroneous to require argument. Their office has been well performed, if they have so trained the mind, as to enable it to continue its own education; if they have given it the wisdom to consider itself a learner, throughout the whole of this earthly probation. Still viewing itself but as a searcher after knowledge and truth, it should bear about with it, and daily deepen the motto of “not having yet attained—neither being already perfect.” It was one of the greatest philosophers, who asserted that the mind ought ever to consider itself “susceptible both of growth and reformation; and that the truly learned man, will always intermix the correction and amendment of his intellect, with the use and employment thereof.” It is most surely appropriate for our sex, to disclaim all fellowship with pride and prejudice, and humbly to seek after wisdom, all the days of their lives.

To you, who, just emancipated from the restraints of “tutors and governors,” stand joyously in your youth and beauty, upon that “isthmus of a middle state,” which divides the sports of childhood from the responsibilities of womanly duty, suffer me to say, from the love I bear you, that your education is but just begun. Every thing around you will conspire to carry on the work.

Associates, friends, those to whom you intrust your affections, are instruments to test the basis of your principles, and complete the development of your character. The books you read, the companions with whom you converse, the dispositions that you cherish, may prove as soft showers to the springing grass—or as mildews to the buds of virtue.

Those whom you teach, will teach you—those who serve you, will influence you in their turn. The reaction is perpetual.

The opinions and habits of those with whom you are most conversant, will insensibly, but indelibly stamp some impression upon your own. They will enter into the sanctuary of the soul—and hang up in its secret shrine, their own images.

Be ever docile, my dear friends, to the hallowed teachings of knowledge and virtue, and see that the influences which proceed from yourselves, are of the same sacred class. For circumstances, relatives, the silent lapse of time, and the sleepless discipline of your heavenly Father, will continue your education until death takes light from the eye, and motion from the hand, and vitality from the heart, and releasing the organs from their obedience to the ruling mind, lays the head where there is neither knowledge—nor device—nor wisdom.

## LETTER IV.

### INDUSTRY.

**THE** faithful use of our intrusted powers, is but a just return for the privilege of possessing them. Capacities for improvement, and opportunities of usefulness, involve accountability, and demand diligence. As duty is connected with enjoyment, Industry is the visible friend of happiness and virtue. It adapts the gifts of the Creator, to the ends which he designed. We are excited to it, by the examples and analogies of nature.

The little rill hastens onward to the broader stream, cheering the flowers on its margin, and singing to the pebbles in their bed. The river rushes to the sea, dispensing on a broader scale, fertility and beauty. Ocean, receiving his thousand tribute-streams, and swelling his ceaseless thunder-hymn, bears to their desired haven, those white-winged messengers which promote the comfort and wealth of man, and act as envoys between remotest climes. In the secret bosom of the earth, the little heart of the committed seed quickens, circulation commences, the slender radicles expand, the newborn plant lifts a timid eye to the sunbeam—the blossoms diffuse odour—the grain

whitens for the reaper—the tree perfects its fruit. Nature is never idle.

Lessons of industry, come also from insect-teachers, from the winged chymist in the bell of the hyacinth, and the political economist bearing the kernel of corn, to its subterranean magazine. The blind pinnæ spins in the ocean, and the silkworm in its leaf-carpeted chamber, and the spider, “taking hold with its hands, is in king’s palaces.” The bird gathers food for itself, and for its helpless claimants with songs of love, or spreading a migratory wing, hangs its slight architecture on the palm-branch of Africa, the wind-swept and scanty foliage of the orcades, or the slender, sky-piercing minaret of the Moslem. The domestick animals fill their different spheres, according to the grades of intelligence allotted them. Man, whose endowments are so noble, ought not surely to be surpassed in faithfulness, by the inferior creation.

It is evident disrespect to our bountiful Benefactor, to divide his gifts from their appointed use and benefit. When we contemplate the wonderful mechanism of the hand, and the far more astonishing skill of the mind that guides it, when we reflect how much labour is required to make ourselves what we wish to be, and to do for others what we ought—when we look beyond this life to the next, and feel that not only on what we do here, but on what we omit to do, depend consequences which Eternity alone can measure, we



are convinced of the truth of the precept, that indolence is not made for man.

Admitting, therefore, the propriety and necessity of industry, let us exhibit the principle in its practical forms. It should be mingled in its most decided aspects, with the period of school-education. That season, when those elements of knowledge are acquired, which in some form or other continue to blend with the mass of character and duty, during the whole of life, is too precious to be trifled away. She who is careless in forming habits of application, or willing to curtail hours of study, fearfully defrauds herself. "If you have great talents," said Sir Joshua Reynolds, "industry will improve them—if you have moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiency. Nothing is denied to well-directed labour—nothing is to be obtained without it."

A young lady, during the course of her instruction in the sciences, came to the conclusion that she had no memory for historical dates, or facts involving numerical statements. In her recitations she resorted to the subterfuge of referring to slips of paper, which she adroitly concealed. When it became difficult to escape detection, she wrote such chronological eras as occurred in her lessons, in the palm of her hand. Half the labour which this deception involved, would have enabled her to commit them to memory, thoroughly and irrevocably. The consequence was, that after the completion of an extensive course of study, she was

utterly destitute of that chronology which is to history what the key-stone is to the arch. The mass which she had accumulated, having neither arrangement, or relative dependance, relapsed into chaos. Fragment after fragment disappeared, until the whole vanished away. Indolence had deprived it of those strong tendrils, by which it would have adhered to the mind. Of the history of the world, from its creation to her own times, to which she had devoted years of study, she might soon have been able to say with Shakspeare :—

“ I remember a dream, but nothing distinctly,  
A quarrel, but nothing wherefore.”

And the loss was through her own folly. Let those who now sustain the interesting character of scholar, see that they suffer no similar misfortune, from any modification of indolence. Were it possible fully to impress the value of that period of existence, ere it passes, never to return, how many who are now impatient of its restraints, would desire to prolong its duration. Could they realize that when life has drawn them within its sphere of labour—though books are always to be found, there may be no leisure to read them—or they may be perused without leaving a single abiding impression on a mind harassed by perplexity and care—they would be anxious that every day of their school-education, should deposite in the store-house of intellect, some treasure that might be safe from the water-floods of time.

Habits of diligence are recommended by the happiness they impart. Indolence is a foe to enjoyment. "There is nothing among all the cares and burdens of a king," said Lewis XIV., to the prince his son, "*so laborious as idleness.*" It is a dereliction of duty. It is disobedience to the command of our Creator. While in bondage to it, we cannot enjoy self-approbation. Rust gathers over the mind, and corrodes its powers. Melancholy weighs down the spirits, and the consciousness of having lived in vain, imbitters reflection. Whatever establishes a habit of regular industry, in early life, is a blessing. Even those reverses of fortune, which are accounted calamities, sometimes call into action energies, with which the possessor was previously unacquainted, and lead to higher degrees of respectability and happiness, than affluence, in its lassitude or luxury, could ever have attained.

Early rising seems generally to have been associated with the industry of those who have attained éminence. "I am sorry," said Demosthenes, "when I hear any workman at his hammer before me." The elder Pliny assigned as one of the reasons why he accomplished so much, that he was an early-riser. He was accustomed to go before daybreak, to receive the orders of the emperor Vespasian, who himself did not waste the precious morning hours in slumber. Buffon, the celebrated naturalist, rose throughout the year, with the sun. In order to do this, he had

to conquer an almost inveterate disposition for morning sleep. He acknowledged himself indebted for this victory to his servant, who resolutely awakened him; until a better habit was formed—and said that to his perseverance, the world was also indebted for at least ten or twelve volumes of his Natural History. The Rev. Mr. John Wesley, was a most conspicuous instance of unvarying industry, and economy of time. On his eighty-fifth birthday, he records in his journal, as among the causes of his continued health, and unimpaired vigour, that he had “constantly for sixty years, risen at four in the morning; and preached a regular lecture at five in the morning, for above half a century.”

Those of our sex, who have been distinguished by energy in the domestick department, are usually exemplary for their improvement of the early hours of the day. A knowledge of those pursuits which promote the comfort and order of a household, should be interwoven with classical education. It may be so mingled, as to relieve, rather than obstruct, intellectual labours.

I have never heard any young lady, deny in words, the excellence of industry, and have known many, who put forth vigorous efforts for the improvement of their most precious season of life. But I have seen no class of people, among whom a more efficient system of industry and economy of time was established, than the agricultural population of New England. Their possessions are

not sufficiently large to allow waste of any description. Hence, every article seems to be carefully estimated, and applied to its best use. Their mode of life, is as favourable to cheerfulness and health, as it is eminent in industry.

The farmer, rising with the dawn, attends to those employments which are necessary for the comfort of the family, and proceeds early with his sons or assistants, to their department of daily labour. The birds enliven them with their song, and the lambs gambol, while the patient ox marks the deep furrow, or the grain is committed to the earth, or the tall grass humbled beneath the scythe, or the stately corn freed from the intrusion of weeds. Fitting tasks are proportioned to the youngest ones, that no hand may be idle.

In the interior of the house, an equal diligence prevails. The elder daughters take willing part with the mother, in every domestick toil. No servant is there, to create suspicious feelings, or a divided interest. No key grates in the lock, for all are as brethren. The children, who are too small to be useful, proceed to school, kindly leading the little one, who can scarcely walk. Perhaps the aged grandmother, a welcome and honoured inmate, amuses the ruddy infant, that she may release a stronger hand for toil.

The sound of the wheel, and the vigorous strokes of the loom, are heard. The fleece of the sheep is wrought up, amid the cheerful song of sisters. Remembering that the fabricks which

they produce, will guard those whom they love, from the blast of winter, the bloom deepens on their cheek with the pleasing consciousness of useful industry.

In the simple and abundant supply of a table, from their own resources, which shall refresh those who return weary from the field, all are interested. The boy, who brings his mother the fresh vegetables, selects a salad which his own hand had cultivated, with some portion of the pride with which Diocletian pointed to the cabbages which he had reared. The daughter, who gathers treasures from the nests of the poultry that she feeds, delights to tell their history, and to number her young ducks as they swim forth boldly on the pond. The bees, whose hives range near the door, add a desert to their repast, and the cows feeding quietly in rich pastures, yield pure nutriment for the little ones. For their bread, they have "sown, and reaped, and gathered into barns;" the flesh is from their own flocks—the fruit and nuts from their own trees. The children know where the first berries ripen, and when the chestnut will open its thorny sheath in the forest. The happy farmer at his independent table, need not envy the luxury of kings.

The active matron strives to lessen the expenses of her husband, and to increase his gains. She sends to market, the wealth of her dairy, and the surplus produce of her loom. She instructs her daughters by their diligence to have a purse

of their own, from which to furnish the more delicate parts of their wardrobe, and to relieve the poor. In the long evenings of winter, she plies the needle, or knits stockings with them, or maintains the quiet musick of the flax-wheel, from whence linen is prepared for the family. She incites them never to eat the bread of idleness, and as they have been trained, so will they train others again; for the seeds of industry are perennial.

The father and brothers, having recess from the toils of busier seasons, read aloud, such books as are procured from the public library, and knowledge thus entering in with industry, and domestick order, forms a hallowed alliance. The most sheltered corner by the ample fireside, is reserved for the hoary grandparents, who in plenty and pious content pass the eve of a well-spent life.

The sacred hymn and prayer, rising duly from such households, is acceptable to Heaven. To their humble scenery—some of our wisest and most illustrious men, rulers of the people, sages and interpreters of the law of God—look back tenderly, as their birthplace. They love to acknowledge that in the industry and discipline of early years, was laid the foundation of their greatness.

Let the children of farmers feel that their descent is from the nobility of our land. In the homes where they were nurtured, are the strongholds of the virtue and independence of their country. If our teeming manufactories should send

forth an enervated or uninstructed race—and our cities foster the growth of pomp, or the elements of discord—we hope that from those peaceful farm-houses, will go forth a redeeming spirit, to guard and renovate the country of their love.

I trust that no young lady, however elevated her station, will conceive that a knowledge of what appertains to the superintendence of a family, can derogate from her dignity.

If the greater advantages which are accorded her, create contempt for the duties of her own womanly sphere, it is a serious and unhappy result. If that sex, through whose liberality greater privileges have been extended to ours, are to be rendered less comfortable in their homes, at their tables, or by their firesides, it is truly a most ungrateful return.

Many causes conspire to attach great importance to the stand, which is to be taken, by the young ladies of the present generation. Criticism is awake to discover what effect their more liberal education will have on the welfare of domestick life. Before them, were a race of accomplished housekeepers, perfect in their ranks, whose families were as regular as clockwork, and whose children early learned the lesson to obey. Not to disgrace such an ancestry, will require no slight energy, or brief apprenticeship.

But they, on whom the present race of young men must depend, for whatever degree of comfort, their future homes may yield—have had in the



forming period of life, their attention turned to sciences, which to the ears of their excellent grandmothers, would have been as strange languages. It is sometimes exemplified, that the best housekeepers are not the best teachers of housekeeping. They find it easier to pursue their own established system, than to have patience with the errors of a novice. Hence their daughters are released from participation in domestick care during that pliant period when it might easily have been made congenial—perhaps, until they have imbibed a distaste for it.

Another circumstance, which renders the present crisis still more hazardous, to those on whom are soon to devolve the burdens of domestick responsibility, is the difficulty of obtaining trusty servants. That this evil increases, is evident to all, whose memories comprise the routine of the last thirty, or even ten years. Yet the exertions necessary to support the structure of refined society, have not diminished. Perhaps proof might be adduced, that they are both heightened and varied by the progress of luxury. If, therefore, the amount of labour in families is increased, and the number of efficient agents diminished, and the knowledge of the superintendant impaired, or taken away—from what quarter can the deficiency be supplied? How is the head of the household to be made comfortable, when he returns from those toils by which that household is maintained?

These are serious questions, not only in their

individual, but political consequences. For the strength of a nation, especially of a republican nation, is in the intelligent and well-ordered homes of the people. And in proportion as the discipline of families is relaxed, will the happy organization of communities be affected, and national character become vagrant, turbulent, or ripe for revolution.

The influx of foreign population renders it doubly important, that some features of our native character and customs, should be preserved for our descendants. And where can these be guarded or transmitted, so well as in the sanctity of a well-ordered home? The habit of breaking up family-establishments, and resorting to boarding-houses, is becoming prevalent in our larger cities. Should it be still more general among those whom wealth and fashion authorize to give tone to society, the consequences must be baneful. The character of the next generation must be affected by it. A less concentrated influence will be brought to bear upon the unformed mind. Children, losing the example of that class of parental virtues which the organization of a family requires, can no longer see their mother diffusing a generous hospitality, or drawing under her shelter, the homeless and the orphan. The father, no longer, by the wise ordering of his domesticks, and by a judicious distribution of checks and encouragements to all, will teach his sons how to legislate for the good of others. The efficiency of the mother must be less called into exercise, and how

can she instruct her daughters in domestick industry, which she has herself no opportunity to practise? The dignity of the man also suffers by this arrangement, and much of the comfort which he proposes from domestick life, must be resigned. Should this disruption of families become widely prevalent, the desultory character of a homeless people would fasten upon us, and the charities that cluster around the hearth-stone, and the domestick altar—which bless the guest, and cheer the babe in its cradle—must wither like uprooted flowers.

I trust, my dear young friends, that you will give these subjects an attentive consideration, and that you will be willing to blend with the pursuits of an accomplished education, a practical knowledge of that science, without which woman must be inert in her own sphere, and faithless to some of her most sacred obligations. Indebted as you are for innumerable privileges to the free government under which you live, you will not surely disregard such forms of patriotism, as fall within your province. Acquaint yourselves, therefore, with all the details of a well-ordered family, and make this department of knowledge, both a duty and a pleasure. For beset as our country may be, with external dangers, or disordered by internal commotions—if from every dwelling there flows forth a healthful and healing influence, what disease can be fatal?

The young ladies of the present generation seem to pass in review before me, with all their privileges, and in all their grace and beauty. Methinks

their hands are upon the ark of their country. Let them not feel that they have only to seek embellishment, to sip from the honey-cups of life, or to glitter like the meteor of a summer's eve. For as surely as the safety and prosperity of a nation depend on the virtue of its people, they, who reign in the retreats where man turns for his comfort, who have power over the machinery which stamps on the infant mind its character of good or evil, are responsible, to a fearful extent, for that safety and prosperity.

## LETTER V.

### DOMESTICK EMPLOYMENTS.

SINCE Industry is the aliment of contentment and happiness, our sex are privileged in the variety of employments that solicit their attention. These are so diversified in their combinations of amusement with utility, that no room need be left for the melancholy of a vacant and listless mind.

Needle-work, in all its forms of use, elegance and ornament, has ever been the appropriate occupation of woman. From the shades of Eden, when its humble process was but to unite the fig-leaf, to the days when the mother of Sisera looked from her window, in expectation of a "prey of divers colours of needle-work on both sides, meet for the necks of those that take the spoil," down to modern times, when Nature's pencil is rivalled by the most exquisite tissues of embroidery, it has been both their duty and their resource. While the more delicate efforts of the needle rank high among accomplishments, its necessary departments are not beneath the notice of the most refined young lady. To keep her own wardrobe perfectly in order, to pay just regard to economy, and to add to the comfort of the poor, it will be

necessary to obtain a knowledge of those inventions, by which the various articles of apparel are repaired, modified and renovated. True satisfaction, and cheerfulness of spirits, are connected with these quiet and congenial pursuits. This has been simply and fortunately expressed, by one of our sweetest poets:—

*" It rains—What lady loves a rainy day?  
 She loves a rainy day, who sweeps the hearth,  
 And threads the busy needle, or applies  
 The scissors to the torn or thread-bare sleeve;  
 Who blesses God that she has friends and home;  
 Who, in the pelting of the storm, will think  
 Of some poor neighbour that she can befriend;  
 Who trims the lamp at night, and reads aloud,  
 To a young brother, tales he loves to hear:  
 Such are not sad even on a rainy day.*

The queen of Louis XI., of France, was a pattern of industry to her sex. Surrounding herself with the daughters of the nobility, whom she called *her daughters*, she was both their teacher and companion, in elegant works of embroidery and tapestry. The churches were adorned with these proofs of their diligence and ingenuity. She considered industry a remedy for a disordered imagination, and a shield against the temptations of a fashionable life. Hence prudence and modesty marked the manners of that court, where their opposites had once prevailed, and the blooming and elegant train by whom she was attended, "bore in their hearts, the honour and virtue which she planted there."

Knitting is a quiet employment, favourable to reflection, and though somewhat obsolete, not unallied to economy. It furnishes a ready vehicle of charity to the poor, and most appropriate during the severity of winter. The timely gift of a pair of coarse stockings has often relieved the sufferings, and protected the health of many an ill-clad and shivering child. It seems to be well adapted to save those little fragments of time, which might else be lost. Mrs. Hannah More, whose example imparts dignity, and even sacredness to common things, was partial throughout her whole life to this simple employment. One of her most interesting and playful letters, accompanied a sample of this kind of industry, as a present to the child of a friend—and stockings of her knitting entered into her charities, and were even sold to aid missionary efforts in foreign climes.

Since the domestick sphere is intrusted to our sex, and the proper arrangement and government of a household are so closely connected with our enjoyments and virtues, nothing that involves the rational comfort of home is unworthy of attention. The science of housekeeping affords exercise for the judgment and energy, ready recollection, and patient self-possession, that are the characteristic of a superior mind. Its elements should be acquired in early life ; at least, its correspondent tastes and habits should never be overlooked in female education. The generous pleasure of relieving a mother or friend from the pressure of care, will

sometimes induce young ladies to acquaint themselves with employments which enable them, when the more complex duties of life devolve upon them, to enjoy and impart the delights of a well-ordered home. To know how to prepare for, and preside at a table which shall unite neatness with comfort and elegance ; where prodigality is never admitted, nor health carelessly impaired, is both an accomplishment and a virtue.

That skill in domestick employments is not incompatible with mental cultivation, there are many examples. To adduce only one, from our own country, Mrs. Child, one of the most indefatigable labourers in the varied field of literature, is not only the author of the "Frugal Housewife," but able practically to illustrate it, with singular energy and versatility. She says, "a knowledge of domestick duties is beyond all price to a woman. Every one of our sex ought to know how to sew, and knit, and mend, and cook, and superintend a household. In every situation of life, high or low, this sort of knowledge is of great advantage. There is no necessity that the gaining of such information should interfere with intellectual acquirement, or even with elegant accomplishment. A well-regulated mind can find time to attend to all. When a girl is nine or ten years old, she should be accustomed to take some regular share in household duties, and to feel responsible for the manner in which her part is performed—such as her own mending, washing the cups and putting them in



place, cleaning silver, or dusting and arranging the parlour. This should not be done occasionally, and neglected whenever she finds it convenient—she should consider it her department. When older than twelve, girls should begin to take turns in superintending the household—keeping account of weekly expenses—making puddings, pies, cake, &c. To learn effectually—they should actually do these things themselves, not stand by, and see others do them.”

Miss Elizabeth Carter, to whom allusion has been already made, as an adept in nine languages, and many sciences, did not neglect those employments which fall within the immediate province of her sex. In needlework, she early accomplished herself, and till near the close of her long life of eighty-nine years, continued its practice. During her youth, while passing a winter in London, a number of shirts which were needed for her brother, were sent to her, which she completed with diligence and pleasure, during the excitements and interruptions of a visit in that great metropolis. When, after the death of her mother, and removal of his children by marriage, her father was left alone, she felt it to be her duty, notwithstanding the devotion of her life to study, to return and superintend his domestick establishment. With the avails of her publications, she purchased a house, where she conveyed her only surviving parent, and for the last fourteen years of his life, made his daily comfort, one of the ruling objects of her existence.

When a literary friend expressed anxiety lest these domestick cares should interfere with her intellectual pursuits, she replied: "I am much obliged to you for the kind partiality which induces you to regret my giving up so much time to domestick economy. As to any thing of this kind hurting the dignity of my head, I have no idea of it, even were the head of more consequence than I feel it to be. The true post of honour consists in the discharge of those duties, whatever they happen to be, which arise from that situation, in which Providence has placed us, and which we may be assured is the very situation best calculated for our happiness and virtue."

If this could be said, by the translator of Epictetus, whose deep and varied knowledge enabled her to fit a young nephew for the university, with how little reason, can the lighter studies of modern female education, be brought as an excuse for utter neglect or dislike of domestick employments.

It should be remembered that while this distinguished woman acquainted herself with every duty and detail, which could make the house which she superintended, agreeable to her father and others, she laid aside none of her literary or scientific pursuits. The same perseverance by which she acquired many languages, she kept in action to retain them. Her daily system was to read before breakfast, two chapters in the Bible, a sermon, and some Hebrew, Greek and Latin. After breakfast, she read a portion in each of the nine languages

with which she was acquainted, so as not to allow herself to lose what she had once gained, while, in her department of housekeeping, nothing was deficient or omitted.

It has been sometimes urged as an objection against the modern system of female education, that the wide range of science which it comprises, turns the attention of the young from household duty, and renders them impatient of its details and labours. This argument seems to address itself to mothers. It might be in their power to refute it, and to associate in the minds of their daughters, with a love of study, a knowledge of the unpretending pursuits of their own future province. Maternal affection would naturally prompt the wish to save them from the mistakes and perplexities to which ignorance might in future expose them. Though perhaps little native affinity exists between intellectual pursuits and household cares, they may doubtless be so united as to relieve each other; and she will give strong proof of the best education and the best regulated mind, who neglects the fewest duties, and despises none.

Order and punctuality are indispensable to those who would well govern a family. The virtues have been styled gregarious. Punctuality, in particular, propagates itself. If the mistress of a house is punctual, the inmates under her roof become so. It is the very soul of system. The spirit of order also diffuses itself from the head to the members of a household. One argument,

for having every surrounding object neatly arranged, is that the operations of the mind are thus influenced. The late President Dwight used to enjoin it upon his students, never to seat themselves for intellectual labour, especially for composition, until their rooms were in perfect order. Sterne found himself impeded in his literary progress, unless every surrounding article was in its place, and himself dressed with neatness. The musical genius of Haydn failed to inspire him, unless his person was carefully arrayed. Lord Bacon, whose mighty mind might be supposed to rise superior to trifling circumstances, acknowledged that he composed with far greater ease, when flowers were tastefully arranged around him. If our sex are not often interrupted in any great literary enterprise, by the disorder of materials under their control, they may be painfully conscious of embarrassed feelings, when surprised by unexpected company, in a careless costume, or a parlour disarranged.

It will be found that in the science of house keeping, no slight degree of practical knowledge is required, to direct others with propriety and profit.

In a state of society, where equality prevails, and where the desire of living without labour is but too common, servants, thoroughly trained in their several departments, are not always to be found. To instruct those who are ignorant; to know when they have done well, and when they have done

enough, when they have reason to be weary, or a right to complain, it is necessary to have had some personal experience of what is required of them. Complaints of the errors of domesticks are very common, and with none more so than with those who are least qualified to direct them. Perhaps too much is expected of them; perhaps we neglect to make due allowance for their causes of irritation, or to sympathize in the hardships of their lot. Possibly we may sometimes forget that the distinctions in society are no certain test of intrinsic merit, and that we "all have one Master, even Christ."

Yet admitting that the ranks and stations are not very clearly defined, and that the lower classes sometimes press upon the higher; this is in accordance with the spirit of a republick, and all should be willing to pay some tax for the privileges of a government, which admits such a high degree, and wide expansion of happiness. If our domesticks draw back from the performance of what the spirit of feudal times, or aristocratick sway might exact, a remedy still remains; to moderate our wants, and study simplicity in our style of living. Much time will be rescued for valuable pursuits, when the love of show and vanity, with their countless expenses and competitions, are stricken from our household lists. She who is content to live more plainly than her neighbours, and dress more simply than her associates, when reason, or the wishes of her friends require it, has gained no slight ascent in true philosophy.

You will perhaps think me an advocate of ungraceful toils, or a setter forth of strange and obsolete opinions. Still bear with me in your courtesy for the few remarks that remain. I would not decry the embellishments of life : I render them due honour ; but I should grieve to see you deficient in its plain and practical duties. Fashion will take care of the former, so I have argued for the latter. Fortunate shall I esteem myself, if the attention of but one mind shall thus be turned to those occupations which render home delightful.

I have ever thought it desirable that young ladies should make themselves the mistresses of some attainment, either in art or science, by which they might secure a subsistence, should they be reduced to poverty. Sudden and entire reverses are not uncommon in the history of affluence. To sustain them without the means of lessening the evils of dependance, when health and intellect are at our command, is adding helplessness to our own affliction, and increasing the burden of others. When the illustrious Henry Laurens, by the fortune of our war of Revolution, was held a prisoner in the Tower of London, he wrote to his two daughters, who had been nurtured in all the tenderness and luxury of Carolinian wealth : " It is my duty to warn you to prepare for the trial of earning your daily bread by your daily labour. Fear not servitude ; encounter it, if it shall be necessary, with the spirit becoming a woman of an honest and pious heart ; one who has been neither

fashionably nor affectedly religious." The accomplished Madame de Genlis pronounced herself to be in possession of thirty trades, or varieties of occupation, by which she could, if necessary, obtain a livelihood. It was a wise law of some of the ancient governments, which compelled every parent to give his son some trade or profession, adequate to his support. Such is now the variety of departments open to females, as instructors in schools and seminaries of their own sex, that they may follow the impulse of their genius in the selection of a study or accomplishment, and while they pursue it as a pleasure, be prepared to practise it as a profession.

Among the pleasant employments which seem peculiarly congenial to the feelings of our sex, the culture of flowers stands conspicuous. The general superintendence of a garden has been repeatedly found favourable to health, by leading to frequent exercise in the open air, and that communing with Nature which is equally refreshing to the heart. It was labouring with her own hands in her garden, that the mother of Washington was found by the youthful Marquis de la Fayette, when he sought her blessing, as he was about to commit himself to the ocean, and return to his native clime. Milton, who you recollect, was a great advocate that woman should "study household good," has few more eloquent descriptions, than those which represent our first mother at her floral toil amid the sinless shades of Paradise.

The tending of flowers has ever appeared to me a fitting care for the young and beautiful. They then dwell, as it were, among their own emblems, and many a voice of wisdom breathes on their ear from those brief blossoms, to which they apportion the dew and the sunbeam. While they eradicate the weeds that deform, or the excrescences that endanger them, is there not a perpetual monition uttered, of the work to be done in their own heart? From the admiration of these ever-varying charms, how naturally is the tender spirit led upward in devotion to Him, "whose hand perfumes them, and whose pencil paints." Connected with the nurture of flowers, is the delightful study of Botany, which imparts new attractions to the summer sylvan walk, and prompts both to salubrious exercise and scientifick research. A knowledge of the physiology of plants, is not only interesting in itself, but of practical import. The brilliant colouring matter which they sometimes yield, and the healthful influences which they possess, impart value to many an unsightly shrub, or secluded plant, which might otherwise have been suffered to blossom and to die, without a thought.

It is cheering, amid our solitary rambles, to view, as friends, the fair objects that surround us, to call to recollection their distinctive lineaments of character, to array them with something of intelligence or utility, and to enjoy an intimate companionship with nature. The female aborigines of our country were distinguished by an extensive



acquaintance with the medicinal properties of plants and roots, which enabled them, both in peace and war, to be the healers of their tribes. I would not counsel you to invade the province of the physician. In our state of society, it would be preposterous and arrogant. But sometimes, to alleviate the slight indispositions of those you love, by a simple infusion of the herbs which you have reared or gathered, is a legitimate branch of that nursing-kindness, which seems interwoven with woman's nature.

And now, to sum up the whole matter. Though in the morning of youth, a charm is thrown over the landscape, every thorn in the path is hidden, every inequality smoothed, yet still, life is not "one long summer's day of indolence and mirth." The sphere of woman is eminently practical. There is much which she will be expected to do, and ought therefore to learn, and to learn early, if she would acquit herself creditably. Though to combine the excellences of a housekeeper, with much eminence in literature or science, requires an energy seldom possessed—still there is no need that domestick duties should preclude mental improvement, or extinguish intellectual enjoyment. They may be united by diligence and perseverance, and the foundation of these qualities should be laid *now, in youth*.

If I have annoyed you by pressing too much on your attention, the detail of humble and homely employment, I pray you to forgive me. It is

because I have felt the immense importance of establishing habits of industry, while life is taking its stamp and colouring. For "if the spring yield no blossoms, in summer there will be no beauty, and in autumn no fruit." The moments of the young are like particles of gold, washed down by the never-staying flood of time. She who neglects to arrest them, or who exchanges them for trifles, must stand in poverty before her Judge. "Thou shalt always have joy in the evening," says the good Thomas a Kempis, "if thou hast spent the day well. Wherever thou art, turn every thing to an occasion of improvement: if thou beholdest good examples, let them kindle in thee a desire of imitation; if thou seest any thing blameable beware of doing it thyself."

The province of our sex, though subordinate, is one of peculiar privilege: sheltered from temptation, and in league with those silent and sleepless charities, which bless without seeking applause. The duty of submission, imposed both by the nature of our station and the ordinances of God, disposes to that humility, which is the essence of piety; while our physical weakness, our trials, and our inability to protect ourselves, prompt that trust in Heaven, that implicit leaning upon a Divine arm, which is the most enduring strength, and the surest protection.

## LETTER VI.

### HEALTH AND DRESS.

THE importance of attention to health is universally admitted. Formerly, the intellectual part of our nature was too exclusively regarded in education. Its early and intense action, in every form of precocity was encouraged. Now, physical welfare is also consulted. That increasing care is bestowed on the safety of the temple where the mind lodges—proves that the structure of that mind is better understood; and the mutual reaction of the ethereal and clay companion, more clearly comprehended.

The great amount of learning and eloquence, imbodyed in the medical profession, has illustrated and enforced this subject. It is not presumed that this little volume can suggest any thing new. Yet it is always safe to repeat those precepts which have peculiar affinity with the safety and comfort of our sex.

The feebleness of females, especially in our large cities, has long been a source of remark, regret, and even reproach. It has been supposed in our own country, that their vigour has deteriorated, within two or three past generations. Habits of

refinement and affluence, seem to have produced an enervating effect. It is important to inquire for the remedy and to pursue it.

Regularity in the hours of rising and retiring, perseverance in exercise, adaptation of costume to the variations of climate, simple and nutritious aliment, and "temperance in all things" are necessary branches of a sanitary regimen. Living in houses which are kept at too high a temperature during winter, and disregarding the ventilation of the sleeping-room, are habits of exceedingly pernicious tendency. The power of enduring exposure to our varying and extreme seasons, is desirable. Yet as there are constitutions of such susceptibility, and temporary states of health to which all are subject, when exposure would be both unwise and unsafe, young ladies should acquaint themselves with some of those forms of active domestick industry, which offer a substitute, when walking abroad is prohibited. Every housekeeper can instruct her daughters in a sufficient variety of these, to prevent her health from suffering, during those occasional sequestrations which must unavoidably occur. Though exercise in the open air, should be daily taken by the young, whenever it is possible—yet it is better to cultivate that pliancy of constitution, which can healthfully exist for a temporary period without it, than to create such entire dependance on external movement, as to induce languor and sickness when it is necessarily precluded. A judicious mother pro-

posed to her daughters a certain proportion of morning exercise with the broom, in the parlour and in their own apartments. "This sweeping makes my arms ache," was their objection after the trial of a few days. "Try it till your arms do *not* ache," was the laconick, but kind reply. Her own experience had taught her, that muscular, as well as mental energy, required habitual training. Vigorous exercise will often fortify a feeble constitution. Walking, especially among rural scenery, is highly salubrious. Riding on horseback, and sea-bathing, when they can be safely and conveniently attained, are powerful tonics for a delicate tissue of nerves.

Since without health, both industry and enjoyment languish, and since the physical imbecility of our sex, operates so banefully upon the whole structure of domestick welfare, it is desirable to multiply those modes of exercise, which are decidedly feminine. Among them, few are more conducive to vigour, than that almost obsolete one, the use of the great spinning-wheel. A writer of other times, styles it somewhat quaintly "Hygeia's harp." The universal exercise which it gives the frame, makes it an efficacious remedy for debility. Its regular, moderate use, has been found salutary even in pulmonary affections.

It is a source of regret that domestick manufactures are so generally banished from the houses of our agriculturists. There are undoubtedly some fabrickes which it would still be profitable to con-

struct there. But admitting that they are less lucrative than before the establishment of incorporated manufactories, the gain which they propose, is of a higher order—the gain of contentment, homefelt happiness, and that increasing interest in domestick concerns, for want of which, many of our young females seek objects of a more exciting and questionable tendency. The busy sound of the wheel, mingling with the song of sisters, as they transmute the snowy fleece into apparel for those whom they love, has a native association with cheerfulness and comfort.

In ancient times, queens and princesses considered the use of the distaff, as no derogation from their dignity. Neither in modern times, is it always despised. Mrs. Hannah More, after a visit to the Dutchess of Gloucester, and the Princess Sophia, writes : “The former gave me a quantity of worsted, *of her own spinning*, for me to knit into stockings for the poor.” If the royalty of England, and the talent which that royalty acknowledged, and by which not only England, but the world was benefited, have not felt such employments beneath them, why should we ?

On the subject of Dress, I am aware that much has been said and written to little purpose. The laws of fashion are often so preposterous, her dominion so arbitrary, that Reason and Philosophy can have little hope of gaining ground in her empire. Neither is it wise to expect of the young, a superiority to reigning modes. Singularity is

never desirable. Still it is possible not to be eccentric, and yet to avoid such a style of dress, as opposes taste, produces deformity, or leads to unnecessary expense. There are a few rules which ought never to be violated by females.

I. *Not to permit fashion to impair health.* This is worse than "to spend money for that which is not bread, and labour for that which satisfieth not." Strong contrasts between the costume worn at home, and abroad, in the morning and at evening parties, are exceedingly prejudicial during the severity of our climate. How often is it the case, that a comfortable garment, worn throughout the winter's day, is thrown off at night, and one of the lightest texture assumed, with a formidable portion of the chest and shoulders left uncovered, while the thermometer is below zero. Mothers ! who are surely interested in the life of your daughters, and whose advice it is hoped, is never rejected, *these things ought not so to be.*

Would that I might persuade my fair young friends, of the importance of preserving their feet in a comfortable and regular temperature. A delicate silk or cotton stocking, with a thin-soled shoe, in the depth of winter, will exhibit to advantage a foot of exquisite symmetry, but the consequences may be mournfully computed, when the "evil days of disease come, and the years draw nigh," when, as far as health is concerned, it must be said, "there is no pleasure in them."

Another point of extreme importance in dress,

is to avoid compression. The evils of obstructed circulation are formidable. Stricture in the region of the lungs and heart, is deeply perilous. Those watchful sentinels, who keep the sacred citadel of life—and never take rest when the other parts of the body slumber, deserve better treatment. How unjust and ungrateful to compel them to labour in fetters, like a galley-slave, and to put those servants to the torture, who turn the wheels of existence, both night and day. I conceive some knowledge of anatomy to be a requisite part of female education. An acquaintance with the complicated structure, and mysterious mechanism of this clay temple, would prevent from so thoughtlessly bringing destructive agents to bear upon its frailty. It might also heighten adoration of that Being by whom, to borrow the beautiful figure of Watts, this “harp of thousand strings is made, and kept in tune so long.”

Few circumstances are more injurious to beauty, than the constrained movement, suffused complexion, and laboured respiration, that betray tight-lacing. The play of intelligence and varied emotion, which throw such a charm over the brow of youth, are impeded by whatever obstructs the flow of blood from the heart to its many organs. In Greece, where the elements of beauty and grace were earliest comprehended, and most happily illustrated, the fine symmetry of the form was left untortured.

But the influence of this habit on beauty is far



less to be deprecated than its effects upon health. That pulmonary disease, affections of the heart, and insanity, are in its train, and that it leads some of our fairest and dearest to fashion's shrine to die, is placed beyond a doubt, by strong medical testimony.

Dr. Mussey, whose "Lectures on Intemperance" have so forcibly arrested the attention of the publick, asserts, that "greater numbers annually die among the female sex, in consequence of tight-lacing, than are destroyed among the other sex by the use of spirituous liquors in the same time." Is it possible that thousands of our own sex, in our own native land, lay with their own hand, the foundation of diseases that destroy life, and are willing for fashion's sake to commit suicide?

The author of "The Influence of Mental Cultivation upon Health," asserts, that "whatever tends to diminish the capacity of the chest, tends also to produce organick disease of the *heart* and *lungs*. Tight lacing is ever a dangerous practice, for if the heart does not suffer, the lungs and spine very frequently do."

Dr. Todd, the late Principal of the Retreat for the Insane, in Connecticut, to whom science and philanthropy are indebted, adduced many instances of the fearful effects of obstructed circulation on the brain. Being requested by the instructress of a large female seminary, to enforce on her pupils the evils of compression in dress, he said, with that eloquence of eye and soul, which none

who once felt their influence can ever forget: "The whole course of your studies, my dear young ladies, conspires to impress you with reverence for antiquity. Especially, do you turn to Greece, for the purest models in the fine arts and the loftiest precepts of philosophy. While sitting as disciples at the feet of her men of august mind you may have sometimes doubted how to balance, or where to bestow your admiration. The acuteness of Aristotle, the purity of Plato, the calm unrepented satisfactions of Socrates, the varied lore of Epicurus, and the lofty teachings of Zeno, have alternately attracted or absorbed your attention. Permit me to suppose that the high-toned ethicks of the stoicks, and their elevation of mind, which could teach its frail companion, the body, the proud lesson of insensibility to pain, have won your peculiar complacency. Yet, while meting out to them the full measure of your applause—have you ever recollected that modern times, that your own country came in competition for a share of fame? Has it occurred to you, that your own sex, even the most delicate and tender part of it, exceeded the ancient stoicks in the voluntary infliction of pain, and extinction of pity? Yes, some of the timid and beautiful members of this seminary, may enter the lists with Zeno, Cleanthus, and Chrysippus, and cherish no slight hope of victory. I trust to prove to you, that the ancient and sublime stoicks were very tyroes in comparison of many a lady of our own times. In degree of suffering, in

extent of endurance, and in perfection of concealment, they must yield the palm. I do assure you, that its most illustrious masters, fruitful as they were in tests to try the body, never invented, imagined, or would have been able to sustain that torture of tight-lacing, which the modern belle steadily inflicts without shrinking, and bears without repining, *sometimes* to her very grave. True, they might sometimes have broken a bone, or plucked out an eye, and been silent. But they never grappled iron and whalebone into the very nerves and life-blood of their system. They might possibly have passed a dagger too deeply into the heart, and died : but they never drew a ligature of suffocation around it, and *expected to live*. They never tied up the mouths of the millions of air-vessels in the lungs, and then taxed them to the full measure of action and respiration. Even Pharaoh only demanded brick without straw for a short time. But the fashionable lady asks to live without breathing for many years.

“The ancient stoicks taught, that the nearest approach to apathy, was the perfection of their doctrine. They prudently rested in utter indifference. They did not attempt to go beyond it. They did not claim absolute denial of all suffering. Still less did they enjoin to persist and rejoice in it, even to the ‘dividing asunder of soul and spirit.’ In this, too, you will perceive the tight-laced lady taking a flight beyond the sublime philosopher. She will not admit that she feels the slightest inconvenience.

Though she has fairly won laurels to which no stoick dared aspire—yet she studiously disclaims the distinction which she faced death to earn, yea, denies that she has either part or lot in the matter, surpassing in modesty, as well as in desert, all that antiquity can boast, or history record.”

We may appeal for evidence of the ravages of extreme stricture in dress, even to the annals of the King of Terrors. Dr. Reese, in speaking of the dissection of two young females who had been addicted to tight-lacing, remarks: “The adhesion of parts, and derangement of structure, were truly frightful.”

The opinion of other eminent physicians, it would be easy to adduce. But I have already to ask your forbearance for a subject, on which I have been diffuse because there seemed much to say, and in earnest, because I felt it to be of importance to the most beautiful and interesting part of the community. The late lamented Dr. Spurzheim, assumed the proposition, that the “physical education of *women*, was of more importance to the welfare of the world than that of *men*.” The rude Spartans well understood this principle. The requisitions of their lawgivers, and the public cares of the nation, were devoted to the physical welfare, and athletick developments of our sex. They omitted in their scale of excellence, that intellectual culture, and refinement of sensibility, to which we too often sacrifice health and vigour. They made the mind a vassal to the

body : we too often make the body a martyr to the mind. I hope, my dear young friends, you will sanction neither *their* vassalage, nor *our* martyrdom, but steering wisely between extremes, so avoid every species of imprudence, to which your period of life is too prone, as not be condemned to mourn at last, when the flesh and body are consumed, saying : "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof."

II. *Dress should never infringe on delicacy*  
This point I would prefer not to dilate upon, but rather recommend to your own reflection, and innate sense of propriety. Unfavourable inferences are usually drawn of those who go to extent in any fashion, whose principle is display. Minds of true refinement will never be in danger of upholding a style of dress which leads to indecorous exposure ; and those of discernment cannot fail to perceive, that what may be thus gained in admiration, is lost in respect.

III. *Dress ought not to involve unnecessary expense.* Every individual, in providing her wardrobe, should call into exercise a correct judgment, and a thorough understanding of what she can afford. Thus she will avoid the uncomfortable habit of pressing on those who supply her purse, demands which are inconsistent with their finances. To make superiors in fortune, the standard of imitation, betrays a defective judgment ; since a proper expenditure for them, would in others be extravagant and unjust. Having as-

certained the point of expenditure, beyond which you ought not to go, an account-book should be regularly kept, and the price of every article purchased, with the date affixed, be accurately and neatly recorded, that current expenses, with their annual amount, may be ever subject to your own inspection, and the revision of those by whom your resources are furnished. Whatever your allowance, or income may be, never spend the whole upon your own person. By moderating your wants, and by economy in the preservation of your wardrobe, reserve to yourself the power and the pleasure, of occasional and simple presents to those whom you love. Let the claims of the poor come into remembrance. A well-regulated mind will experience true satisfaction in avoiding the purchase of an expensive garment, that the sickly sufferer may be clothed and fed.

It is a beautiful self-denial for the affluent to set an example of plainness and simplicity. Such an influence is peculiarly salutary in our state of society, where the large class of young females, who earn a subsistence by labour, are so addicted to the love of finery, as often to omit the substantial and comfortable articles of apparel, and lay up nothing from the wages of many years of service. The conscientious will therefore inquire, not merely if they are *able* to indulge in expensive decorations, but what will be the *effect of their example*, on those who are not.

IV. *Dress should not engross too much time.*

The duties of the toilette should be confined to regular periods, and to reasonable bounds. She who contemplates her own image too constantly, will be less disposed for higher subjects of thought. Neatness, comfort, and a becoming costume, are objects worthy of attention. But a profusion of ornament, is neither necessary nor graceful to the young. There is a beauty in their own fair season of life, and in the sweet and happy temperament which ought to accompany it, that strikes more strongly on the heart, than "gold or pearls, or costly array." A showy style of dress, is peculiarly inappropriate to those who are pursuing their education. It indicates that something besides study, has taken possession of the heart.

To highly ornamented and striking apparel *in church*, there are still stronger objections. A morning spent in the decoration of the person, is a poor preparation for the duties of the soul. An eye roving about among surrounding costumes, during the solemn services, and a heart disposed to comment upon them in the family, are little in unison with the design of the Sabbath, and sinfully subversive of its sacred privileges.

Let us now dismiss the subject of Dress, with the single remark, that simplicity and grace seem to be the elements of its power to charm, and that those will be the least in danger of permitting it to absorb too much of their time, whose hearts are filled with the love of higher and better things.

## LETTER VII.

### MANNERS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

THE desire of pleasing is natural and strong in youth. If guided to correct channels, it is an incentive to improvement, and happiness. When it rejects the motive of selfishness, and seeks only to "please others for their edification," it becomes a Christian virtue. This may be easily distinguished from that restless pursuit of popularity, which being the offspring of ambition and pride, ever involves some elements of disappointment and envy.

In the art of pleasing, the instruments least dependant on contingencies, are undoubtedly *good manners*. They are of far more importance to the young, than the adventitious distinctions of dress and beauty : more valuable than the latter, because more permanent, and more certain in their results than the former, because a style of dress which attracts one class of admirers may be repulsive to another, but fine manners are intelligible to all mankind, and a passport in every country.

Affability and the smile of cheerfulness are expected from the young, as spontaneous expressions of the felicity of their fair season of life. "Soft-



ness of manner, and complacency of countenance," says Dr. Darwin, "gentle, unhurried motion, and a voice clear and tender, are charms that enchant all hearts." It was the praise of Anne of Austria, the mother of Lewis the Great, that her manners evinced dignity without pride, more striking than even her youth and extreme beauty, and that there was in her countenance such a living charm of benignant expression, as communicated to those who beheld her, tenderness chastened by respect.

Good manners, to be consistent, must be founded on a principle of justice. Their tribute of deference and respect should be first paid where it is first due; to parents, teachers, ministers of religion, civil rulers, superiors in knowledge, and those whose whitened heads bear the crown of time and of virtue. It seems to be among the evils of modern times, that such distinctions are too little acknowledged. Wealth attracts the gaze of the vulgar, and sometimes wins influence, though unassociated with talents or piety; but those grades of rank, which are announced by the voice of nature, and the precept of God, demand our reverence. They constitute orders of nobility, even in a republic, and those who pay them due honour, reflect honour upon themselves. Especially, is it fitting and graceful for the young of our sex, to recognise the claims which a refined and religious community impose. Would that I might persuade each one of them, to show the most marked deference to age. It was remarked of a

lady, distinguished both for talents and accomplishments, that when in company, she always selected the oldest persons for her first and highest attentions, afterward, children, or those who, from humble fortune or plain appearance, were liable to be neglected, shared that regard from her, which made them happy and at ease. Her manners, if analyzed, seemed a combination of equity and benevolence ; first, rendering what she considered to be due, and then pursuing what she felt to be delightful. Respect to age, and kindness to childhood, are among the tests of an amiable disposition. Undeviating civility to those of inferior stations, and courtesy to all, are the emanations of a well-educated mind, and finely-balanced feelings. There is a certain blending of dignity with sweetness, not often exhibited, but always irresistible. Without creating reserve, or chilling friendship, it repels every improper freedom, and couples respect with love. It combines a correct estimate of the high destinies of our nature, with a tender sympathy for all its infirmities.

There was a fine character of dignity, in the manner of females of the higher classes in the olden time. We, of modern days, think it was sometimes carried too far ; but we are verging to the opposite extreme. So anxious are we to be *entertaining* in society, that we reserve no power by which its follies are to be checked, or its tendencies elevated.

The mother of Washington was pronounced a

model of true dignity in woman. She possessed the lofty characteristics of a Roman matron, and a heart of deep and purified affections, and a modesty that commanded the reverence of all. At the head of a large household, whose charge, by the death of her husband, devolved solely upon her, the energy and dignity of her character preserved subordination and harmony. To the inquiry what was the course pursued in the early education of her illustrious son, she replied: "*The lesson of obedience.*" When the war of the Revolution terminated so gloriously for his country and for himself, and when after an absence of nearly seven years he hastened to pay his filial respects to his venerated parent, the officers of the French and American armies were anxious to see the mother of the chief. A splendid festival, given at Fredericksburgh, to welcome the conquerors of Cornwall, furnished them with an opportunity. "The foreign officers," says Mr. Custis, in his "Recollections of Washington," "had heard indistinct rumours of her remarkable life and character, forming their judgments from European examples; they were prepared to expect that glare and show which would have been attached to the parents of the great, in the countries of the Old World. If they were surprised, when the matron, leaning on the arm of her son, entered the room dressed in very plain, yet becoming garb, worn by the Quaker lady of the old time of day. Her address always dignified and imposing, was courte-

though reserved. She received the complimentary attentions that were paid her, without evincing the slightest elevation, and at an early hour, wishing the brilliant assembly much enjoyment of their pleasure, retired as she had entered, resting upon the arm of her son. Such an effect had her simplicity of garb, and dignity of bearing, upon the officers accustomed to the heartless pomp of European courts, that they affirmed it was no wonder that "America produced the *greatest men*, since she could boast of such *mothers*."

The style of manners, like the fashion of dress, changes with different ages, and takes a colouring from the spirit of the times. Ceremonies vary, but the ornament of courteous and dignified deportment is never obsolete. It will adorn and give weight to character wherever refinement is appreciated, or kindness of heart beloved.

With regard to accomplishments, as they are popularly termed, so much depends upon circumstances, the wishes of those who direct education, and the impulse of taste, that it would be impossible to give any definite rule, except that they do not interfere with the attainment of solid learning. The true order of acquisition seems to be, *first*, what is necessary; *second*, what is useful; *third*, what is ornamental. To reverse this arrangement, is like beginning to build at the top of the edifice. Let the foundation be laid firm and deep, and the superstructure may safely admit of ornament. Stated parts of the day should be allotted as their

province, that they need not entrench on the limits of more essential, though less alluring pursuits.

Before entering upon this part of my subject, permit me to present a solemn passage from that eminent author, who has given a motto to this volume, and whose writings, having been celebrated throughout the world, ought at least to claim the deference of her own sex. "Is it fair," she asks, "that what relates to the body, and the organs of the body, I mean those accomplishments which address themselves to the *eye* and to the *ear*, should occupy almost the whole thoughts; while the intellectual part is robbed of its due proportion, and the spiritual part has almost no proportion at all? Is not this preparing the young for an awful disappointment, in the tremendous day, when they must be stripped of that body, of those senses and organs which have been made almost the sole objects of their attention, and shall feel themselves in possession of nothing but that spiritual part, which in education was scarcely taken into the account of their existence?"

A taste for Drawing, heightens the admiration of Nature by enforcing a closer examination of her exquisite workmanship, from the hues of the wild flower, to the grandeur of the forest, and the glowing beauties of the extended landscape. The construction of maps, often taught to children at school, is a good preparation for the study of perspective, while the vignettes with which they may be adorned, give exercise and expansion to the

young germs of taste. Those who make such advances in Drawing and Painting, as to be able to sketch designs and groups from History, derive high intellectual pleasure, from this elegant attainment.

Musick, at present the most popular of all accomplishments, is a source of surpassing delight to many minds. From its power to sooth the feelings, and modify the passions, it seems desirable to understand it, if it does not involve too great expense of time. Vocal musick is an accomplishment, within the reach of most persons. "I have a piano within myself," said a little girl, "and I can play on that, if I have no other."

An excellent clergyman, possessing much knowledge of human nature, instructed his large family of daughters, in the theory and practice of musick. They were all observed to be exceedingly amiable and happy. A friend inquired if there was any secret in his mode of education. He replied: "When any thing disturbs their temper, I say to them *sing*, and if I hear them speaking against any person, I call them to sing to me, and so they have sung away all causes of discontent, and every disposition to scandal." Such a use of this accomplishment might serve to fit a family for the company of angels, and the clime of praise. Young voices around the domestick altar, breathing sacred musick, at the hour of morning and evening devotion, are a sweet and touching accompaniment.

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Instrumental musick, being more expensive in its attainment, both of money and time, and its indifferent performance giving pain to those of refined sensibility, seems scarcely desirable to be cultivated, unless the impulse of native taste prompts or justifies the labour. The spirited pen of Miss Martineau, in her "Five First Years of Youth," has sketched a pleasing description of a young lady possessing a strong predilection for musick: "She sang much and often, not that she had any particular aim at being very accomplished, but because she loved it, or, as she said, because she *could not help it*. She sang to Nurse Rickham's children—she sang as she went up and down stairs—she sang when she was glad and when she was sorry—when her father was at home, because he liked it, and when he was out, because he could not be disturbed by it. In the woods at noonday, she sang like a bird, that a bird might answer her; and if she awoke in the dark night the feeling of solemn musick came over her, with which she dared not break the silence."

Where such a taste exists, there is no doubt, that opportunities for its improvement should be gladly accepted. Where there is no taste, it seems cause of regret, when time, perhaps health, are sacrificed to the accomplishment. Even where a tolerable performance of instrumental musick might probably be attained without the prompting of decided taste, there may be danger of absorbing too much of time and attention, from those employments

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which a female ought to understand, and will be expected to discharge. "I am nothing when away from the piano," said an amateur of musick. "If one happens to be in sight, I am always looking at it, and while people are talking to me of other things, I think only of that."

Dancing, which from ancient times ranked high among accomplishments, has occasionally fallen into disrepute, from the late hours, and display in dress, with which it is too often associated. It would be difficult to say why such accompaniments have been found necessary. It should be entirely divested of them, and of the excitement of mixed company, when it is taught to young ladies who are attending school. Without these restrictions, it has been known to break in upon a prosperous course of study, and substitute frivolous thought, and vanity of dress; and surely the period allotted to female education is sufficiently limited, without such abridgment.

The polished Addison asserted that the principal use of a lady's being taught dancing was, that she might "know how to sit still gracefully." As a mode of exercise in the domestick circle, it is healthful, and favourable to a cheerful flow of spirits. I was once accustomed to witness it in a happy family, where the children at the close of the reading and lessons which diversified the long winter evenings, rose to the musick of the piano, while the parents, and even grandparents, mingling with the blooming circle, gave dignity to the



innocent hilarity in which they participated. There was nothing in this to war with the spirit of the prayers which were soon to follow, or to indispose to that hymn of praise, which hallowed their nightly rest. Of dancing, with its usual combinations of vanity, waste of time, and exposure of health, this cannot be said : and for any amusement or accomplishment necessarily attended with these serious drawbacks, I would not be considered an advocate.

Reading aloud, with propriety and grace, is an accomplishment, worthy the acquisition of females. To enter into the spirit of an author, and convey his sentiments with a happy adaptation of tone, emphasis, and manner, is no common attainment. It is peculiarly valuable in our sex, because it so often gives them an opportunity of imparting pleasure and improvement to an assembled family, during the winter evening, or the protracted storm. In the zeal for feminine accomplishments, it would seem that the graces of elocution had been too little regarded. Permit me to fortify my opinion, by the authority of the Rev. Mr. Gallaudet : " I cannot understand, why it should be thought, as it sometimes is, a departure from female delicacy, to read in a promiscuous social circle, if called upon to do so, from any peculiar circumstance, and to read too as well as Garrick himself, if the young lady possesses the power of doing it. Why may she not do this, with as much genuine modesty, and with as much of a desire to oblige her friends

and with as little of ostentation, as to sit down in the same circle, to the piano, and play and sing, in the style of the first masters? If to do the former is making too much of a display of her talents, why should not the latter be so? Nothing but some strange freak of fashion, can have made a difference."

Fine reading is an accomplishment, where the inherent musick both of the voice and of the intellect may be uttered; for the scope and compass of each, is often fully taxed, and happily developed, in the interpretation of delicate shades of meaning, and gradations of thought. Its first element, to be *clearly understood*, is often too much disregarded, so that with some who are pronounced fashionable readers, low, or artificial intonations so perplex the listener, as to leave it doubtful whether the "uncertain sound, be piped or harped."

Thus it sometimes happens, that in fashionable penmanship, the circumstance that *it is to be deciphered*, seems to have been forgotten. "To read so as not to be understood—and to write so as not to be read, are among the minor immoralities," says the excellent Mrs. Hannah More. Elegant chirography, and a clear epistolary style, are accomplishments which every educated female should possess. Their indispensable requisites, are neatness, the power of being easily perused—orthographical and grammatical correctness. Defects in either of these particulars are scarcely par-

donable. You are aware that the handwriting is considered one of the talismans of character. Whether this test may be depended on or not, the fact that letters travel farther than the sound of the voice, or the sight of the countenance can follow, renders it desirable that they should convey no incorrect or unfavourable impression. The lesser niceties of folding, sealing, and superscription, are not beneath the notice of a lady. Mrs. Farrar, in her excellent little work on Letter-writing, remarks, that it is "well to find out the best way of doing every thing, since there is a pleasure in doing things in the *best way*, which those miss, who think *any way* will do." Do not indulge in a careless style of writing, and excuse yourself on the plea of haste. This nourishes a habit which will be detrimental to excellence. Our sex have been complimented as the possessors of a natural taste for epistolary composition. It is an appropriate attainment, for it admits the language of the heart which we understand, and rejects the elaborate and profound sciences in which we are usually deficient. Ease and truth to nature, are its highest ornaments, and Cicero proved himself to be no less a master of its excellences, than of his more sublime art of eloquence, when he said: "Whatever may be the subject of my letters, they still speak the language of conversation."

To a finished female education, the acquisition of languages is generally deemed essential. The patient research which they require is a good dis-

cipline for the mind, and the additional knowledge they impart, of the etymology and use of our own native tongue, is both valuable and delightful. Yet they can scarcely be considered desirable appendages, unless thoroughly understood. To preserve many in memory, even after they are carefully attained, requires more leisure than usually falls to the lot of woman, when life's cares accumulate around her. The attempt to pass off before a critick a smattering of a foreign tongue, is a vanity easily detected, and always despised. Those ladies who have the leisure, the intellect, and the love of severe study, necessary to conquer the idioms of the dead and living languages, will doubtless find stores of literature and gems of thought, sufficient to repay the toil. Still, I press the monition, *avoid being superficial*. It is the danger of females of the present age. Expected to master the whole circle of sciences, with a cluster of the fine arts in a few short years, and those years too often injudiciously curtailed by the vanities of dress and fashionable amusement, is it surprising that they should sometimes have the reputation of possessing, what they really do not understand? Thus they even become willing to appear to others, what in reality they are not. Superficial knowledge induces superficial habits of thought. It strikes at the root of integrity. The love of display is often permitted to enter too much into the tissue of female education. Almost the whole routine of domestick duty is opposed to

it. Hence, there springs up a warfare, between the early training and ultimate business of woman, which her life is sometimes too short to harmonize and settle.

“Brilliant talents, graces of person, confirmed intrepidity, and a continual habit of displaying these advantages, seem all that is aimed at in the education of girls. The virtues that make domestick life happy—the sober and useful qualities which render a moderate fortune, and retired situation comfortable, are never inculcated. The parents’ first error, in the preference of accomplishments to virtues, naturally leads their miseducated daughters, to prefer sentiment to principle, and make it the guide of their life.” This is the suffrage of the late celebrated Mrs. Montague. Surely, none could be better qualified to pronounce the value of brilliance, grace and accomplishments, or to lay them in the balance, with that solid knowledge, pure principle, and domestick virtue, whose aggregate is but another name for happiness.

Let us then be less anxious to make a display of accomplishments, than to possess true merit. The words of Archbishop Tillotson, are of weighty import: “Sincerity, is to speak as we think, to do as we intend and profess, to perform and make good what we promise, and *really to be*, what we would seem and appear to be.”

For those whose lot forbids both the acquisition of accomplishments, and the embellishments of

dress, there remains an attainment less adventitious and more durable in its impression, than either. *True politeness*, that charm to which every nature is susceptible, is within their reach. It is often seen rendering poverty, and the plainest exterior agreeable, while its absence makes knowledge repulsive, and robs beauty of its power to please.

This was what added the most attractive charm to the beautiful Lady Jane Grey. The learned Roger Ascham, after expatiating on her accomplishments, the elegance of her composition, and her intimate acquaintance with the French, Italian, Latin and Greek languages, adds, as the crowning grace, the "*possession of good manners.*"

True politeness requires humility, good sense, and benevolence. To think more "highly of ourselves than we ought to think," destroys its quickening principle. Idle and heartless ceremony may spring up from its decayed root, but the counterfeit is ever detected. Its first effort is to subdue and extirpate selfishness; its next to acquire that knowledge of human nature, which will enable it wisely to regulate itself by the sympathies of those around. Its last feature, reveals alliance with a higher family than the graces. Forming a bright link between the accomplishments and virtues, it claims affinity with that heaven-born spirit which on the plains of Bethlehem, breathed in melody from the harps of angels, "peace on earth and good will to men."

## LETTER VIII.

### SISTERLY VIRTUES.

THAT class of duties, which rest on the basis of the nearest affinities, it would seem, might easily be performed. Nature, in pouring the blood from the same fountain, gives bond for their faithful discharge. Those who were nurtured on the same breast, and rocked in the same cradle, who side by side took their first tottering steps, who together shared paternal tenderness, admonition, and prayer, ought to form a bond of the firmest and fondest alliance. Clustered like pearls upon the same thread, each should live in the reflected light and beauty of the other. Twined and woven together, in the very elements of their existence, the cordage should resist every shock save the stroke of the spoiler. Encompassed and girded by the holiest sympathies, whatever may be the pressure or the enmity of the world, they should stand as the Macedonian phalanx, or still more impenetrable, as that Christian brotherhood, which is to be unbroken and perfected in heaven.

But is it always thus? The Book of Truth informs us that a "brother offended is harder to be won, than a strong city, that their contentions are like the bars of a castle:" admitting that there

are, even in this endeared union, possibilities of discord, and capacities for estrangement. History has shown us the ties of blood trampled on by ambition, but it has set its strong seal of reprobation, on Cambyses, and Caracalla.

Our own observation teaches us that this sacred concord is sometimes broken, and that it too often fails of the entire harmony which it might exemplify. Sisterly and fraternal affection, ought to involve sympathy, confidence, aid in every momentous crisis, and a unity which nothing can sever. Why should those whom Nature has enriched with such friends, shrink from any measure of the world's unkindness? Disappointments may well be borne, by spirits thus fortified. And when the novelty is stripped from life, and its burdens make the heart serious, what an inspiring cheerfulness enters into it, from the smile of the sister who drank with us, our first cup of joy, the voice of the brother, which mingled in our earliest infant melodies.

Those, who are thus blessed, cannot estimate the loneliness of the beings, whose childhood was bereft of such companionship, who go through life pursuing coveted sympathies, and grasping shadows—making to themselves molten images, instead of living and legitimate comforters, perhaps, rashly solacing themselves for the denial of nature, by unfolding to strangers, the sorrowful secrecies of a brotherless and sisterless heart. This deprivation of one of the deepest and purest sources of



affection, should be viewed and borne as a bereavement, intended to lead the spirit to a more ardent search after heavenly consolations.

Those who have the solace of fraternal relationship, should endeavour to appreciate the privilege, and affectionately to discharge the obligations which it implies. How many forms may these obligations take, in the varied intercourse of life ! It was through the sisterly affection of Madame Dacier, that her genius was first brought to light. While employed in her childhood, at her task of embroidery, her brother rendered his recitations to his father, in the same room. His examinations in the classicks, were close and rigid, and when she saw him hesitating or confused, her sympathy was awakened. She therefore prepared herself to act as his prompter, and while she seemed quite engaged in assorting her silks, or arranging their shades in her tapestry, would earnestly watch his progress, and as soon as he was distressed, or at a loss, would suddenly look up from her needle, and make answer for him. Her father thus discovering her superior talents, was induced to give her a learned education. Thus on the amiable basis of love for a brother, rose the fame of the future translator of Calliniachus, who for many years, by her own efforts, and afterward in conjunction with her husband, transfused the wealth of the Greek and Roman classicks into the language and literature of France.

Fraternal affection is as graceful in its develop-

ments to the eye of the beholder, as it is cheering to the heart where it resides. There are some, who though not deficient in its more important duties, are but too regardless of those lesser demonstrations of attachment, which are so soothing to the susceptible heart. Every delicate attention which tenderness prompts, every mark of politeness, which refined society requires, ought to pervade the intercourse of brothers and sisters. It is a mistake that good manners are to be reserved for visitors, and that in the family-circle, negligence and coarseness may be indulged with impunity. Even nature's affections may be undermined or shaken, by perseverance in an improper deportment, more than by lapses into error and folly. For the latter, repentance may atone—while the former check the flow of the heart's warm fountains, until they stagnate, or become congealed.

I knew a father, himself a model of polished manners, who required of his large family, to treat each other at all times with the same politeness that they felt was due to their most distinguished friends. Rudeness, neglect, or indifference, were never tolerated in their circle. Respect to each other's opinion, a disposition to please and be pleasing, care in dress, and courtesy of manner, were not considered thrown away, if bestowed on a brother, or a sister. Every one of the group was instructed to bring amiable feelings, and powers of entertainment, to their own fireside.

The result was happy. The brothers felt it an honour to wait upon their sisters, and the sisters a pleasure to do all in their power, for the comfort and improvement of their brothers. This daily practice of every decorum, imparted to their manners an enduring grace, while the affections which Heaven implanted, seemed to gather strength from the beauty of their interchange. I would not assert that fraternal or sisterly affection, may not be deep and pervading, without such an exterior, yet it is surely rendered more lovely by it; as the planets might pursue in darkness, the order of their course, but it is their brilliance which reveals and embellishes it.

Every well-regulated family might be as a perpetual school. The younger members, witnessing the example of those, whose excellence is more confirmed, will be led by the principle of imitation, more effectually than by the whole force of foreign précept. The custom of the older daughters, to assist in the education of their less advanced sisters, I rejoice to see, is becoming more common. It cannot be too highly applauded. What should prevent their assuming the systematick office of instructors, when circumstances are favourable to such an arrangement?

"I cannot," says the young lady, nurtured in affluence, "I cannot go forth as a teacher of strangers. My feelings shrink from such notoriety. There seems a sort of degradation in it, to which I am not willing to submit. Still, I acknowledge

that our sex can do great good by teaching, and I have a desire to do good."

Here then is the opportunity. You need not leave your home for the abode of strangers. Your delicacy will not be distressed by exposure, nor your pride, if you acknowledge such a guest, wounded by a change of station. Here are your scholars, bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh, gathered under the same shelter, seated around the same board. Whatever you have to teach them, impart it kindly, and diligently, in the fear of the Lord. Doubt not he will give you a reward, in the heightened affection of those whom you serve—in the deeper root, and fairer harvest of that knowledge, whose fruits you divide with them. Shaking the superflux to them, you increase your own mental wealth. If you cannot assume the whole charge of their education, take but a part. Labour in a single department. Hold yourself responsible for their proficiency, in the branch that you undertake to teach. Whatever advances you have made in knowledge, you cannot but be most happy to share their benefits with those so dear. Consider your own education as quite incomplete, until self-education is added; and there is no better mode of facilitating this, than the instruction of others. It furnishes the strongest motive to fashion your own example on that model of purity and excellence, which you urge them to pursue. "*For their sakes,*" said the Apostle, speaking of those who had listened

to his instructions—"For their sakes I sanctify myself."

By what method can a daughter more fully evince her gratitude to her parents, than by aiding their children in the search of knowledge, and of goodness. How amiable, how praise-worthy, is that disposition, which prompts a young and beautiful creature to come forth as the ally of a mother, in that most overwhelming of all anxieties, so to train her little ones, as to form at last, an unbroken family in heaven. No better apprenticeship for future duty could be devised, and no firmer hostage given to God or man, for its faithful performance.

Permit me to point out a subordinate mode of doing good, in which the young ladies of a family, might happily co-operate. Fortunately, the ancient custom of receiving into the household, some child of poverty, and rearing it as an assistant in domestic toils, until qualified to earn a subsistence, has not yet fallen into entire disuse. A strong additional reason, for receiving and extending it, is now found in the increasing difficulty of obtaining servants. Housekeepers, who thus rescue but a single being from ignorance or vice, to be trained for usefulness and virtue, confer no trifling benefit on the community.

In a service of this nature, mothers might safely and successfully associate their daughters. Could they not depute the intellectual culture of their humble protégé to those young instructors?—

Would it not be to them a profitable exercise? By making them in a measure accountable for the intelligence, and correct deportment of their pupil, would not kind and generous dispositions be cherished on one side, and gratitude take root on the other?

Might not the young ladies of a family, in the attentions bestowed on a female of this class, sometimes adopt as an ultimate object, the preparation of an assistant to mothers, in the physical care of their little children?

It must surely be a pleasure to inculcate the neatness, patience, tenderness, purity of thought, and piety, which are essential to that interesting and important station. Beside these requisites, the young instructresses should cultivate in their pupil, a taste for useful books, and improving conversation—the accomplishment of telling bible-stories, and of singing soothing and simple melodies. A class of nurses thus endowed, and possessing the correct deportment which accompanies good sense, and good temper, would be invaluable, and deserve to be treated with respect and regard, by all whom they should serve. Let the young ladies of our land take pains to educate such individuals whenever it shall be in their power. They will win the warm thanks of that multitude of mothers, who are often so overburdened with the physical care of their offspring, as to be forced to neglect their moral training, and who continue to bear this burden, from inability to find those

who might divide it, without exposing the opening mind to the contamination of ignorance, vulgarity, or immoral example.

Those young ladies, who may be willing to add to their bright class of sisterly virtues, the instruction of the younger members of their beloved family-circle, should endeavour to teach *agreeably*. As far as possible they should secure the affections of their pupils, and represent knowledge to them, as another name for happiness. A sisterly instructor must not rest satisfied to teach only by the hearing of lessons, or the repetition of precepts ; but by gentle deportment, cheering smiles, tender tones, and the whole armory of love.

Most of our incitements to sisterly effort, will apply with peculiar force to the *oldest daughter* of the family. The right of primogeniture, though not acknowledged under our form of government, still exists under certain limitations, in almost every household. It does not, indeed, as in some other countries, transmit a double portion of the paternal inheritance, or a sounding title, or a royal prerogative ; since with us, there are neither entailed estates, nor orders of nobility, nor monarchical succession. But Nature herself, gives pre-eminence to the first-born, who promotes the parent, at once, to the climax of enjoyment and of duty, and wakes those springs of unutterable affection, which nothing but the ice of death can seal. The voice, which first told the young man, he was a father, will never be forgotten—though that

voice was but the wail of the feeblest infant. The little hand, whose touch first kindled in a mother's heart, an emotion not to be defined by language, an aspiration of ecstasy, never before breathed or imagined, will be leaned on in adversity or widowhood with peculiar trust—and the balm-cup which it offers, will be taken with complacency, even to hoary hairs. There will often be found lingering in the parental bosom, some mixture of that partial tenderness, with which a dying patriarch styled his first-born, notwithstanding his prominent faults, the “excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.”

Admitting, therefore, that priority of birth implies some degree of precedence, not in power, or wealth, but in influence over the affections of the domestick circle, it should be the earnest inquiry of all thus situated, how they may accomplish the greatest amount of good. The station of the eldest sister, has always appeared to me, so peculiarly important, that the privileges which it involves, assume almost a sacred character. The natural adjunct and ally of the mother, she comes forth among the younger children, both as a monitress and an example. She readily wins their confidence, from a conviction, that more freshly than even the parent, she is “touched with the feeling of their infirmities.” She will sometimes be empowered to act as an ambassador to the higher powers, while the indulgence that she obtains, or the penalty that she mitigates, go down into the



vale of years, among sweet and cherished remembrances. In proportion to her interest in their affections, will be her power to improve their characters, and to allure them by the bright example of her own more finished excellence. Her influence upon brothers, is often eminently happy. Of a young man, who evinced high moral principle, with rich and refined sensibilities, unusually developed, it was once said by an admiring stranger, "I will venture to predict that he had a *good sister, and that she was older than himself.*"

It has been my lot, to know more than one elder sister, of surpassing excellence. I have seen them assuming the office of teacher, and faithfully imparting to those whose understandings were but feebly enlightened, the advantages of their own more complete education. I have seen them softening and modifying the character of brothers, breathing until it melted, upon obduracy which no authority could subdue.

I have seen one, in the early bloom of youth, and amid the temptations of affluence, so aiding, cheering and influencing a large circle of brothers and sisters, that the lisping student came to her, to be helped in its lesson—and the wild one from its sports, brought the torn garment, trustingly, to her needle—and the erring one sought her advice or mediation—and the delighted infant stretched its arms to hear her bird-like song—and the cheek of the mother, leaning on so sweet a substitute, for got to fade.

I knew another, on whose bosom, the head of a sick brother rested, whose nursing-kindness failed not, night or day, from whom the most bitter medicine was submissively taken, and who grasping the thin cold hand in hers, when death came, saw the last glance of the sufferer's gratitude, divided between her, and the mother who bare him.

I have seen another, when the last remaining parent was taken to God, come forth in her place, the guide and comforter of the orphans. She believed that to her who was now in heaven, the most acceptable mourning would be to follow her injunctions, and to fulfil her unfinished designs. Her motto was the poet's maxim :—

“He mourns the dead, who live as they desire.”

As if the glance of that pure, ascended spirit was constantly upon her, she entered into her unfinished labours. To the poor, she was the same messenger of mercy, she bore the same crosses with a meek and patient mind. But especially to her younger sisters and brothers, she poured out, as it were, the very essence of her being. She cheered their sorrows, she shared and exalted their pleasures, she studied their traits of character, that she might adapt the best methods both to their infirmities and virtues. To the germ of every good disposition, she was a faithful florist—to their waywardness, she opposed a mild firmness, until she prevailed.

She laid the infant sister, on her own pillow,

she bore it in her arms, and rejoiced in its growth, and health and beauty. And when it hasted on its tottering feet to her, as to a mother, for it had known no other, the smile on that young brow, and the tear that chastened it, were more radiant than any semblance of joy, which glitters in the halls of fashion. The little ones grew up around her, and blessed her, and God gave her the reward of her labours, in their affection and goodness. Thus she walked day by day, with her eye to her sainted mother, and her heart upheld by the happiness which she diffused—and as I looked upon her, I thought that she was but a “little lower than the angels.”

## LETTER IX.

### BOOKS.

A TASTE for reading is important to all intellectual beings. To our sex, it may be pronounced peculiarly necessary. It is important to all, because it is the way in which aliment is conveyed to the mind ; and to our sex peculiarly necessary, because dwelling much on the contemplation of little things, they are in danger of losing the intellectual appetite. Their sphere of household employment, engrossing much attention to its cardinal points, "what shall we eat, and wherewithal be clothed," disposes the mind either to pine away in the atrophy of ignorance, or to be puffed up with the vanity of superficial knowledge. A taste for reading is therefore to them, an armour of defence. It is also a resource, when the world reveals its emptiness, or the things of the world confess their inability to satisfy the heart. Men go abroad into the busy current of life, and throw aside their chagrins and disappointments, and lose the narrowness of personal speculation, in its ever-fluctuating tide. Home, the woman's province, admits of less variety. She should therefore, diversify it by an acquaintance with the world of in-

telleet, and shed over it the freshness derived from the exhaustless fountains of knowledge. She should render herself an entertaining and instructive fireside companion, by daily replenishing her treasury, with that gold which the hand of the robber may not waste, nor the rust of time corrode. The love of books is also a refuge in those seasons of indisposition, when active duties are laid aside, when even conversation is a burden, and that gayety of heart which was as sunshine to life's landscape, has taken its flight. In youth and health, you can scarcely appreciate the truth of this argument. But confirm *now* your taste for reading into a habit, and when the evil days come, you will be better able to prove its value, than I am to enforce it.

Devote even the fragments of your leisure to some useful book. Pliny employed a person to be always reading to him, as he rode from place to place, in his sedan. He made extracts, even from common works, for he said, "there is no book so poor, as not to afford something valuable." The great Roman orator, Cicero, read with a pen in his hand, ever making comments. "Secure the interstices of your time," says the celebrated Robert Hall, "and you will be astonished to find how much reading you will get through in a year." Yet I trust that you will not be contented to leave a pursuit of such magnitude, to casual and interrupted portions of time. I hope to persuade you to establish a systematick course of reading. A

statesman of Queen Elizabeth, who was well acquainted with her habits, said in the quaint language of those times: "That great princess used to the very last year of her life, to appoint set hours for reading, scarcely any young student of any university, more daily, or more dully." Set apart a stated period of each day for this employment. Have it understood, that it is not to be dispensed with, except from imperative necessity. Do not dismiss your habits of study, when you cease to attend school. That crisis is often a hazardous one, in the history of a young lady. If she has gained distinction there, without a radical love of knowledge, her improvement ceases with the excitement that sustained it. If a latent fondness for expensive dress and fashionable amusements was cherished in her period of classical education she will rush into them with an eagerness proportioned to her previous restraint. Satisfied with past honours, and believing that she "has already attained, and is already perfect," she slumbers at her post, and in a few years, perceives those outstripping her, whose talents she once held in contempt. Every young lady who, at leaving school, entertains a clear and comfortable conviction that she has finished her education, should recollect the reproof of the excellent Dr. Rush to a young physician, who spoke of the time when he finished his studies: "*When you finished your studies!* Why, you must be a happy man to have finished so young. I do not expect to finish mine as long

as I live." Life is but one great school, and we are all pupils, differing in growth and progress; but all subjects of discipline, all invested with the proud privilege of acquiring knowledge, as long as the mind retains its powers. There is an affecting lesson in the death of that philosopher, who, after it was supposed that breath had forsaken him, faintly raised his head to listen to some improving conversation that was conducted in his chamber, and even drew the curtain, saying, "*I shall be most happy to die, learning something.*"

But while the value of knowledge renders a *taste for reading* so important, *the choice of books* is equally so. They produce the same effect on the mind, that diet does on the body. They may either impart no salutary nutriment, or convey that which is pernicious. Miscellaneous reading has become so fashionable, and its materials so multifarious, that it is difficult to know how to select, or where to fix a limit. May we not say, with my Lord Bacon, "there seemeth to be a superfluity of books. But shall no more be made? Yea! make more *good books*, which, like the rod of Moses, may devour the serpents of the enchanters."

Works of imagination usually predominate in the libraries of young ladies. To condemn them in a mass, as has been sometimes done, is hardly just. Some of them are the productions of the finest minds, and abound with the purest sentiments. Yet, discrimination, with regard to them, is exceedingly important, and such discrimination

as a novice cannot exercise. The young should therefore ask guidance of an experienced and cultivated mind, and devote to this class of reading, only a moderate portion of time, as to a recreation. Frequent and long indulgence in it, creates disgust at the patient acquisition of solid learning, as compound and poignant dishes destroy a relish for plain and healthful food. It forms habits of desultory thought, and uproots mental discipline. It makes it an object not to *read and remember*, but to *read and be amused*. So the fanciful palate is pleased, and the imagination pampered, while the hungering judgment, to borrow Cowper's simile, "looks up, and is not fed."

Among works of this description, those which are denominated novels of deep and stirring interest, are calculated to heighten in the young mind those powers which need no excitement. In the language of Mrs. Hannah More :—

"They add fresh strength, to what before was strong."

Habits of excursive fancy, and illusive views of life, are not salutary in their influence on those whose business it is to reason, and to act ; to bear, and to forbear. If such works ever exercise a beneficial tendency, it must be in the season of age, when torpor is stealing over the faculties, when the feelings need quickening by touching the nerve of early and tender association, and memory would sink into lethargy were she not awakened by the heart. They can no longer mis-



lead the traveller when his journey is accomplished. He can compare their highly coloured delineations with the sober truth of life's "twice told tale," and be safely entertained. Yet there is no need for the young to exhaust the cordials of age. It is wiser to be busied in furnishing a full storehouse for that approaching winter, when the errors of seedtime cannot be corrected, nor the sloth of harvest repaired, when the mind in its weariness, is too feeble to dig, and in its poverty, to "beg will be ashamed."

History has ever been warmly commended to the attention of the young. It imparts knowledge of human nature, and supplies lofty subjects for contemplation. It should be read with constant reference to geography and chronology. A fine writer has called these "the eyes of history." They are also the grappling irons by which it adheres to memory. As some historians are deficient in dates, or not lucid in their arrangement, a table of chronology, and an atlas, ancient and modern, should be the inseparable companions of all books of history, which are to be studied with profit. It is a good practice to fix in the memory some important eras—the subversion of an empire, for instance—and then ascertain what events were taking place in all other nations, at the same period of time. A few of these parallels, running through the History of the World, will collect rich clusters of knowledge, and arrange them in the conservatory of the mind.

History is replete with moral lessons. The instability of human power, the tyranny of man over his brother, and the painful truth that the great are not always the good, mark almost every feature of its annals.

Read History with candour and independence of mind. The opinions of the historian should be examined, and the gilding stripped from false glory. The admiration so profusely bestowed on warriors and conquerors, should be analyzed. And if conquerors are discovered to have wrought more evil than good, to have polluted the fountains of peace and liberty, and to have wantonly shed blood and caused misery for their own aggrandizement, let the sentence upon their deeds be given in equity, though the heathen world counted them as gods, and Christendom blindly sanctioned the homage.

Next in intellectual interest to History, and superior to it in its influence upon the heart, is the study of Biography. If, according to Livy, "the mind, in contemplating antiquity, itself becomes antique,"—the study of pure and elevated characters, will have a tendency to impart to the student some degree of similarity. Through this familiar intercourse with the wise and good, we forget the difference of rank, and the distance upon earth's surface that divided us. We almost listen to their voices, and number them among our household friends. We see the methods by which they became distinguished, the labours by which their emi-

nence was purchased, the piety that rendered them beloved, and our desire of imitation is awakened. As by our chosen associates, the character is modified, so the heart exhibits some transcript of the models kept most constantly in its view.

The poets will naturally be favourites, in the library of an educated young lady. They refine sensibility, and convey instruction. They are the friends of nature and knowledge, and quicken in the heart, a taste for both. "The song of the Muse, allureth to the land of learning," says a quaint yet shrewd writer, "The poet," saith Sir Philip Sydney, "doth at the very first, give you a cluster of grapes, that full of their taste, you may long to pass further. This world is a *brazen* world—the poets alone deliver a *golden* one, which whoever dislikes, the fault is in their judgment, and not in the *sweet food of sweetly-uttered knowledge*."

Your course of reading, should also comprise the annals of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. Perhaps, human genius has never displayed itself more gloriously than in these departments. To throw life into inanimate canvass—to make dull marble breathe—indicate as much of creative power, as may be deputed to man. The efforts of the Grecian chisel have been the world's admiration for two thousand years. And though the colours of that pencil have faded, the names of those painters still survive in the freshness of immortality. Upon the revival of letters, genius would not

long be withheld from her favourite occupations Michael Angelo seized with unfaltering hand the chisel of Phidias. Raphael and Titian, Correggio and Guido, successively emulated, in their radiant traces and fine conceptions, their elder brethren of the Grecian school. Architecture, in its various orders, and grades of proportion and symmetry, is worthy of attention. It is true, that the Fine Arts are not indigenous to our infant country. But her cradle-reachings have been after them, and she has surely wielded the pencil with no feeble hand. The destiny of an educated woman may perhaps lead her to the older continent—or before the bright eyes that explore these pages are dim with age, our native artists, or our increasing munificence, may furnish the means of viewing and admiring at home, those monuments of taste, which mingle with the glory of Europe.

Mental Philosophy claims a high rank among the studies of youth. It promotes self-knowledge, one of the direct avenues to wisdom. If the map of man be interesting, though darkened with crimes, and stained with blood, how much more, the peaceful map of the mind, that “mind, which is the standard of the man.”—“Ye admire,” says an ancient philosopher, “the Georgicks of Virgil, why slight ye the georgicks of the mind, which treat of the husbandry and tillage thereof?”

I am persuaded that you would find *Logic* a subject of sufficient interest to enter into your course of reading. The *art of thinking*, so im-

portant to all who have the power of thought, is possibly too little studied by our sex. Our inverted mode of reasoning, and the slight structure of our arguments, often expose us to the criticism even of school-boys. A science, which, according to the concise definition of Watts, "teaches to use reason well, in inquiries after truth," is an important aid in the acquisition of all other sciences.

Ethicks and sacred literature, will undoubtedly occupy a prominent place in your system. These embrace a wide range, and comprehend some of the most gifted minds, of which our world can boast. Books for perusal on the Sabbath, should ever partake of the character of that consecrated day. The command, to rescue a seventh-part of our time from the vanities of life, and select such topics of meditation and discourse, as serve to prepare for a higher and purer state of existence, is indeed a great privilege. I pray you to regard it as such, and to improve it faithfully. It will break in upon the follies of the week, and form link after link of that golden chain, which binds the heart to heaven.

The author of the excellent lecture on the "Temporal Benefits of the Sabbath," remarks: "Almost every one knows the effect of a journey on the views that we habitually take of our business. We look back from a distance, and find that to some things we had given far too large a place in our thoughts, and in our hearts. We correct our false estimates, and return to our posts

with rectified judgment, as well as renovated health. The Sabbath has a similar effect in clearing away the mists that blind our judgment, and we shall never know in this world, from how many foolish and ruinous plans we have escaped through its influence. The current of earthly schemes and cares must be checked, the chain of worldly associations broken, or as to intellectual benefits, the Sabbath comes and goes in vain. The power to check this current, to break this chain, belongs chiefly to the sublime and momentous concerns of eternity. They disenchant the heart, as nothing else can, of the spirit of gain and ambition. They drive the 'strong man armed' from his castle, and give the imprisoned mind, a temporary respite."

Let the Scriptures form a part of the study of every day. Read a stated portion in the morning, with the aid of some commentary, and let its spirit go with you as a guide and a counsellor. Never read the book of Heaven in haste, or as a task, with a wandering intellect, or without subsequent meditation.

All systematick reading should be with a fixed purpose to remember and to profit. Cultivate the retentive power, by daily and persevering exercise. If any one complains that she has a weak memory it is her own fault. She does not take due pains to give it strength. Does she forget the period for meals, the season for repose? Does she forget the appointed hour for the evening party, or to furnish herself with a fitting dress in which to

appear there? Does she forget the plot of the *last* romance, or the notes of a fashionable piece of musick? Yet some of these involve detail, and require application.

Why then might not the same mind contain a few historical facts, with their correlative dates? Frankly, because it does not feel the same interest, nor put forth the same effort. Some, who are not willing *entirely* to forget what they read, content themselves with making extracts from the books that pass through their hands. But this is not a successful mode of impressing their contents. To form a written memory is like "making to ourselves a graven image," and suffering the spiritual essence to escape. All reliance on memoranda is a false indulgence to memory. It is keeping her in leading-strings, when she should walk erect, like a labourer to the field. It would seem that she shared in the indolence of our common nature, and would willingly accept of any substitute, that would relieve her from responsibility. But so important are her functions to the welfare of the immortal mind, that she should feel it her duty to be as sleepless as the Roman sentinel, and be made to answer for her sin, if the idea committed to her custody escape.

I am inclined to think memory capable of indefinite improvement, by a judicious and persevering regimen. Read, therefore, what you desire to remember, with concentrated and undivided attention. Close the book, and reflect. Undigested

food throws the whole frame into a ferment. Were we as well acquainted with our intellectual, as with our physical structure, we should see undigested knowledge producing equal disorder in the mind.

To strengthen the memory, the best course is not to commit page after page verbatim, but to give the substance of the author, correctly and clearly in your own language. Thus the understanding and memory are exercised at the same time, and the prosperity of the mind is not so much advanced, by the undue prominence of any *one faculty*, as by the true balance, and vigorous action of *all*. Memory and understanding are also fast friends, and the light which one gains will be reflected upon the other.

Use judgment in selecting from the mass of what you read the parts which it will be useful or desirable to remember. Separate and arrange them, and give them in charge to memory. Tell her it is her duty to keep them, and to bring them forth when you require. She has the capacities of a faithful servant, and possibly the dispositions of an idle one. But you have the power of enforcing obedience, and of overcoming her infirmities. At the close of each day, let her come before you, as Ruth came to Naomi, and "beat out that which she has gleaned." Let her winnow repeatedly, what she has brought from the field, and "gather the wheat into the garner," ere she goes to repose.



This process, so far from being laborious, is one of the most delightful that can be imagined. To condense, is perhaps the only difficult part of it; for the casket of memory, though elastic, has bounds, and if surcharged with trifles, the weightier matters will find no fitting place.

While Memory is in this course of training, it would be desirable to read no books whose contents are not worth her care: for if she finds herself called only occasionally, she may take airs, like a froward child, and not come, when she is called. Make her feel it as a duty, to stand with her tablet ready, whenever you open a book, and then show her sufficient respect, not to summon her to any book unworthy of her.

To facilitate the management of Memory, it is well to keep in view, that her office is threefold. Her first effort is to *receive* knowledge; her second, to *retain* it; her last, to *bring it forth*, when it is needed. The first act is solitary, the silence of fixed attention. The next is also sacred to herself and her ruling power, and consists in frequent, thorough examination of the state and order of the things committed to her. The third act is social, rendering her treasures available to the good of others. Daily intercourse with a cultivated mind, is the best method to rivet, refine and polish the hoarded gems of knowledge. Conversation with intelligent men, is eminently serviceable. For after all our exultation on the advancing state of female education, with the other sex will be found

the wealth of classical knowledge and profound wisdom. If you have a parent, or older friend, who will at the close of each day kindly listen to what you have read, and help to fix in your memory, the portions most worthy of regard, count it a privilege of no common value, and embrace it with sincere gratitude.

Weekly societies, organized on the plan of recapitulation, render very important assistance to those who are earnestly engaged in a course of History. They should comprise but few members, and those of somewhat congenial taste and feeling, that no cause of restraint or reserve may impede the free action of the mind. Three or four young ladies, with one or two older ones, will be found an agreeable and profitable number. Let the system to be pursued, and the authors to be studied, be a subject of mutual arrangement, and at the stated meeting, let each compress the substance of what she has read during the week, relate the principal events with their chronology, and as far as possible mention what was taking place at the same period of time, in the annals of other nations. Opinions dissenting from those of the historian should be freely given, with the reasons for such variation, and the discussions which arise, will both serve to fix knowledge firmly in the memory, and aid in forming a correct judgment of the character and deeds of those, whom History has embalmed. If to read, each of the same era or people, produces monotony, the history of dif-

ferent nations may be studied, or one can pursue a course of biography, another of mental philosophy, the natural sciences, or theology, and thus vary the mental banquet. From this partnership in knowledge, great increase of intellectual wealth will be derived, while your subjects of thought and conversation will be perceptibly elevated. "*The elevation of the mind*," says Burke, "ought to be the principle end of all our studies : which, if they do not in some measure effect, they are of very little service to us."

Books, as a species of property, seem to be often incorrectly estimated. They are borrowed and injured without compunction, borrowed and not returned, and still the conscience is at rest. The owner may sustain inconvenience by waiting, or damage by loss, but the depredator is unmoved. If a young lady borrows a shawl or an umbrella in a shower, she returns them without injury ; if she takes the loan of a dollar from her friend's purse, she repays it promptly. But a book from her library, she may be months in reading, or in not reading ; may abuse and see abused, or not restore at all, unless the owner take the trouble to claim it. Why are the treasures of Genius, less regarded than the silkworm's web ? and why is it dishonest to steal a dollar, and honest to detain, deface, or destroy a book worth twice that sum ?

I have known a kind-hearted owner of books, who prized literary property as it ought to be prized, persist in lending to careless persons, who

continued tenaciously to retain possession, till at length she would be forced to go and "gather together her dispersed, that were scattered abroad." To collect and identify them was no slight labour, but patiently would she search book-shelf, sofa and work-basket, and return loaded with her recovered treasures, like a shepherd bringing stray sheep from the wilderness.

I would have books treated with reverence. I cannot bear to see even a child spoil the spelling-book from which it has learned the alphabet. It savours of ingratitude to a benefactor. Were the books of children composed of better materials, and executed in a more tasteful style, the habit of preserving them would doubtless be earlier and more faithfully inculcated. A sort of sacredness seems to attach itself even to the *page*, on which knowledge has impressed its lineaments, and the cover which protects it from defilement, and from the atmosphere. "Every child," says Dr. Dwight, in his theology, "should be taught to pay all his debts, and to fulfil all his contracts, exactly in the manner, completely in the value, punctually at the time. Every thing which he has borrowed, he should be obliged to return, uninjured, at the time specified, and every thing belonging to others, which he has lost, he should be required to replace." Would that this excellent principle were wrought in with the basis of female education.

And now, dear young ladies, let me release you from this long dissertation upon books, after I have

commended them to your intimacy as *friends*, safe, accessible, instructive, never encroaching, and never offended at the neglect of any point of etiquette. Can this be said of all your associates?

When intercourse with the living becomes irksome, or insipid, summon to your side the departed spirits of the mighty dead. Would you think it an honour to be introduced into the presence of princes and prelates, or to listen to the voice of Plato or Socrates? Close the door of your reading-room, and they congregate around you. Yea, a *Greater than Socrates* will be there, if you ponder his words, with an humble and teachable soul. If trifles have disturbed you during the day, sages will admonish you of the serenity and dignity which ought to characterize the immortal mind.

Has ambition deluded you? the fallen monarch will show you the vanity of adulation, and the hollowness of all human glory. Are you out of spirits? the melody of the poet shall sooth you, and do for you, what the harp of David did for the moodiness of Saul. Has friendship grieved you? *They* offer you consolation, on whose virtues Death has stamped the seal, *never to change. Make friendship with the illustrious dead.* Your slightest wish, as a talisman, will gather from distant climes, and remote ages, those who can satisfy the thirst of the mind, from the deepest fountains of knowledge.

*One volume* there is, whose spirit can heal the wounded heart. When it sorrows for its own in

firmities, and for the unsatisfying nature of earth's vaunted pleasures, the voice of prophets and apostles, lifted up from its inspired pages, teaches the way to that world "where is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore."

Let me close in the eloquent words of the author of "Lectures to Young Men." "This book, the eldest surviving offspring of the human intellect, the chosen companion of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and of all the wisest and best men who have ever lived; this book that reveals to us the character and will of our great Creator, and final Judge; that opens for us the way of salvation through a Redeemer; unveils to our view the invisible world, and shows us the final destiny of our race; this book which God has given, expressly to teach us our character, our duty, and our prospects, which has conducted to heaven all who have reached that happy world, and must conduct us thither, if ever we attain to its blessedness; this book ought surely to be held by us, in the highest place of respect and honour, to be made the guide of our youth, the companion of our age, our solace and support in all the prosperous or trying passages of life."

## LETTER X.

### FRIENDSHIP.

So sweet is the idea of friendship, that its name is one of the earliest upon our lips, and the latest to linger there. The child, in its migration from nursery to school, selects a favourite playmate, and in bestowing its simple gifts and caresses, nurses the latent capacities of friendship. "*This is my friend,*" says the young lady, who during the progress of her education, presents ardently and proudly to her parents, what she conceives to be a kindred spirit. "*My friends are gone,*" mournfully exclaims the hoary man, while the consciousness that he must "finish his journey alone," deepens the acquiescence, with which he lies down in the grave.

But the *name* of friendship is more common than the *reality*. Many who are familiar with its terms, have never fathomed its depth, or tasted its purity. They may have learned to describe or compute the "unrusting gold," without the power to acquire or to retain it. In this respect, as well as in a far higher sense, "not every one, that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom."

A rare combination of virtues, is requisite to

friendship. A generous, disinterested, affectionate spirit, elevation of character, and firmness of principle, are among its essential elements. It is no wonder that the plant is not of more frequent growth.

I hope that each one for whom I write, may be capable of a deep and enduring friendship, for one of her own sex. I do not of course, refer to that gregarious principle, which prompts to promiscuous associations, or multiplies hasty and changeful intimacies. This is sufficiently prominent in the susceptible season of youth, and sometimes leads to errors which it is difficult to rectify, or produces results, which are to be repented of. The qualities that constitute a *good friend*, reflect lustre on human nature.

It was numbered among the excellences of the Rev. Charles Wesley, that he was formed for friendship. "His cheerfulness and vivacity, ever refreshed the heart of his friend: with attentive consideration he would enter into, and settle all his concerns, as far as he was able—would do any thing for his good, either great or small, and by a habit of openness and freedom, leave no room for misunderstanding." Whenever these lineaments of character are brought into reciprocal action, they produce that high and hallowed intercourse, which makes mutual dependance a blessing. The friendship, which I hope each of you may be able to attain and exemplify, comprises sympathy in sorrow, counsel in doubt, encouragement in virtue,



that blending of the strength of two spirits, which nothing but death can part, and which cemented by piety, looks to a consummation in that purer clime, where "affection's cup hath lost the taste of tears."

If you seek permanent friendship, look to the basis on which it is erected. The first native material for the hand of the architect, seems to be congeniality of taste, pursuit, or principle. That opinions should always harmonize, is not necessary. This would fetter originality of thought and abridge freedom of intercourse. It would involve too frequent sacrifices of the prerogative of judgment, and affect independence of sentiment. Still that degree of similarity in mental structure is desirable, which prevents frequent discords, and does not leave the feelings in opposite zones.

Friendships founded in fondness for fashionable amusements, must be fluctuating. Their texture is like the wing of the butterfly. They are incapable of forming a chain for the heart. Those intimacies which spring up from community in prejudice, are perverted at the root, and will scarcely be more stable than the passions or enmities which gave them birth. Partaking of an unwholesome nutriment, their fruits will be bitter, and their influence on the heart, baleful. "The friendships of youth," said a severe moralist, "are but too often combinations for vice, or leagues in pleasure." We trust that the epithet *often* is misapplied. At least, the name of *friendship* ought not to be coupled with such definitions.

Reciprocity of intellectual taste, gives a genial soil for friendship. Hence, it so frequently takes root, during the progress of education. The fruits of knowledge are easily engrafted upon so generous a stock. The interwoven tendrils and bud-dings of genius, communicate a strength and fragrance, peculiar to themselves. "That perfect unity of feeling," says D'Israeli, "which makes of two individuals, one being, was well displayed in the memorable friendship of Beaumont and Fletcher, whose labours were so combined that no critic can detect the mingled production of either, and whose lives were so closely united, that no biographer can compose the memoirs of one, without running into those of the other."

Love of literature is an affinity of no common fervour, and if undisturbed by competition, ripens into a peculiar and almost ethereal tenderness. The friendship of Petrarch and Boccacio had this basis. When the former passed through Florence, in 1350, he was full of curiosity to see the man, whose premature powers had excited the astonishment of Italy, and who at seven years old, ere he was capable of defining poetry, had composed it. But he found him engaged in trifling and desultory efforts, unworthy of his genius. Petrarch, then at the height of his reputation, having received the crown, and that enthusiastic idolatry, with which his countrymen fostered literary ambition, conceived a friendship, both honourable to himself and beneficial to its object. Its first effort was like

that of Socrates for Alcibiades. By decided admonitions, he roused him to more severe labours, and exalted pursuits. Boccacio, yielding to this influence, awoke as to a new being. By application, he sought for some portion of that learning and classick elegance of style, which distinguished his disinterested adviser. Starting forth from indolent repose, he became active for the welfare of his country, he took part in the various embassies, he laboured to promote the happiness of the people, to diminish the prevalent errors of the great, and to advance the diffusion of knowledge.

Petrarch rejoiced in the quickening and almost transforming power of his friendship. Its first office had been to elevate character. Its second, was equally ennobling, to sustain under poverty and obloquy. For both of these came upon Boccacio. In toils for the publick good, he had expended his fortune, and the jealousy of little minds, followed him, with its scorpion lash. At one period, every friend forsook him. Petrarch alone remained immoveable. "Come to me," he said; "my purse and my home, like my heart, are yours." But the delicacy of Boccacio, shrank from dependance, even upon the most generous of friends. Retiring to his little cottage in Certaldo, he wished to bury himself in hermit contemplations. Thither disease followed him, so that to read, to write, or to think, became a burden. But the remembrance of the friendship of Petrarch was a balm, when the essence of life seemed exhaling.

The slow lapse of years brought him health. By the urgency of the Florentines, he was again induced to assume the duties of a professorship. There he lectured for a year with his accustomed eloquence. Then, tidings of the death of Petrarch fell like a blight upon him. The only being who had inspirited him to excellence was gone. The last link of a most generous friendship, had vanished. It was a shock, he had not vigour to sustain. Henceforth, the world to him, was a desert. His bereaved sensibilities fed on the springs of life, and he soon followed to the grave the only friend whose affection had never swerved.

Similar, though still more tragick, was the grief of the poet and historian, Politiano, for the loss of his illustrious friend, Lorenzo de Medici. After the decease of his patron, his genius drooped, and his literary ambition languished. The image of him, who had fostered his talents, and listened with delight to his verses, seemed present with him, but to deepen his melancholy. The misfortunes that befell the Medicean family, he deplored as his own. It was in 1494, while fitting some elegiack stanzas which he had composed on the memory of his beloved friend Lorenzo, to the harp, that his eyes dim with tears, deceived him, and falling from the head of a flight of stairs, he expired.

There is a sentiment of friendship for the illustrious dead, to which refined minds are susceptible. Towards those, whose pages have imparted to us knowledge and delight, we turn in moments of

solitude with sacred and tender regard. We almost imagine them to be standing by our side, and hearkening to our gratitude. They have left us an inalienable bequest, a "treasure that waxeth not old." We commune with them as benefactors, we rejoice in the "sad but exalting relationship to the great minds that have passed away, and explore an unbounded range of noble scenes, in the overawing company of departed genius and wisdom."

The highest sentiments and noblest pursuits of our nature, should be invoked to give permanence to friendship. "It is an error," says an ingenious philosopher of our times, "to found attachment on the lower faculties, which are unstable, instead of building it on those higher sentiments which afford a foundation, for real, lasting, and satisfactory friendships. In complaining of the vanity and vexation of intimacies, springing exclusively from the lower faculties, we are like men who should try to build a pyramid on its smaller end, and lament the hardness of their fate, and the unkindness of Providence when it fell."

Reciprocity of religious feeling and principle is the best groundwork for enduring friendship. "There is no true friendship," said St. Augustine, "but that which God cements." Piety and friendship enjoin congenial duties. One enforces the extirpation of selfishness: the other requires the exercise of the disinterested virtues. One demands the charity, which "seeketh not its own,

and thinketh no evil,"—the other prompts that sweet preference of another's good, which is allied alike to benevolence and humility.

The inimitable portrait of friendship given us in the pages of Inspiration illustrates, with great power, the principles of generosity and gratitude. Jonathan, the heir to the throne of Israel, and taught to connect all his high hopes and prospects with so precious a birthright, sees in his friend, the person designated to supplant him in that royal dignity. The watchful eye and jealous mind of Saul, is ever deepening the suggestion: "As long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the earth, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom." But the friendship which "had knit his soul to that of David, so that he loved him as his own soul," resists every temptation. He repels the vengeful policy of his father, relinquishes his own aggrandizement, and puts his life in peril for his friend.

David, precluded by his situation, from displaying equal magnanimity, evinces a gratitude which absorbs his whole soul—that gratitude which dwells only with noble natures, and is the test of what their generosity would have been, had Heaven given them the power of conferring benefits. His elegy on his fallen friend breathes the very spirit of tenderness and sorrow. One of his first inquiries, after his elevation to the throne, when the wars and tumults through which he had long struggled, began to subside into tranquillity,

reveals the cherished warmth of grateful friendship: "Is there any yet left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness *for Jonathan's sake?*"

How affecting is his tenderness to the desolate and decrepit son of Jonathan, whom he sought out in obscurity and want: "Fear not, I will surely show thee kindness *for Jonathan, thy father's sake.*" His imperishable gratitude embraces even the memory of Saul, his mortal enemy, by whom he had been "hunted, as a partridge on the mountains." He remembered only that he was the father of his friend. With what reverence does he speak of that unhappy monarch, and how affectionately does he return thanks to those, who rendered him the rites of sepulture: "Blessed be ye, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, and have buried him, and now the Lord show kindness and truth unto you, and I also will requite you, because ye have done this thing."

It would seem that the simplicity of ancient times, was more favourable than our own, to the developments of self-devoted friendship. The history of remote ages, records instances which have no modern parallel. To hazard fortune, safety, or even life for a friend, was held consistent with the obligations of that sacred preference. Now, it scarcely evinces sufficient courage to defend the chosen individual, against the aspersions or ridicule of fashionable society. In searching for the reasons of this difference, we perceive that

the artificial structure of society has changed the requisitions of friendship and checked its vitality. Promiscuous association, is adverse to its healthful growth. Its principle requires concentration. If diffused over too wide a surface its essence escapes. Perhaps, it is scarcely capable of expansion, without being exhaled. Formal and ceremonious visiting, to the exclusion of that simple intercourse which opens the heart, nourishes habits which are inimical to friendship. She who invites her "dear five hundred friends," and lavishes much time and expense on the entertainment, perhaps, loves not one of them in her heart. Those studied courtesies, in which truth has little part, tend to bewilder and break up that sincerity, which is an essential element of friendship.

Kindness, benevolence, and good manners, are due to all with whom we associate. But the intimacy which leads to entire confidence, should be bestowed on few, perhaps, reserved for one alone. Hence, the choice of that single friend, becomes a point of incalculable importance.

Friendship has been always a favourite theme with the poets. Among English bards, none have more minutely analyzed or dissected it, than Dr. Young. Permit me here to inquire, if his "Night Thoughts" have not become too entirely, and unjustly obsolete, and if many a young lady might not find in them, some profitable hint for serious contemplation. Hear him on our chosen theme :



Deliberate on all things, with thy friend,  
But since friends grow not thick on every bough,  
*First, on thy friend, deliberate with thyself.*  
Pause, ponder, sift ; not eager in the choice,  
Nor jealous of the chosen ; fixing, fix :  
*Judge before friendship, then confide till death."*

The tendency of the younger part of our sex, to form friendships, has been ridiculed as a weakness by some severe critics. I consider it rather as a virtue, as an indication of amiable susceptibility, and a disposition to acknowledge that mutual dependence, which is the law of our nature. Still it requires more judgment than usually falls to the lot of youth, to guard it from that disappointment which accompanies hasty preferences, and that inconstancy and danger which are created by promiscuous and changing intimacies. Correct principles, kind feelings, good sense and incorruptible integrity, are the natural and safe corner-stones for the temple of friendship. That there should be no great dissimilarity in rank, station or education, seems desirable. Where striking disparities exist, the union of sentiment cannot be perfect, and situations may arise, in which one party, feeling inflated, and the other abased, loss of confidence will be the result.

If you have been so happy as to find a friend, with whom your pursuits and pleasures may be shared, whose sympathy awaits your sorrows, who gives strength to your good resolutions, and with whom your secret thoughts are as safe as in your own bosom, guard the precious treasure by every

demonstration of true and invariable regard. You have found what the wise son of Sirach styles the "medicine of life." Be grateful to the Giver of all good, and be faithful to the duties that such a possession devolves upon you. Since friendship is a blessing from heaven, consecrate it as the means of mutual preparation for admission there.

Merit confidence by frankness, at the same time, that you guard with fidelity, whatever secret may be intrusted to you. "Reserve wounds friendship, and distrust destroys."

To point out to each other mutual faults and imperfections, in the spirit of tenderness, and with a view to improvement and elevation of character, marks a high grade of attainment in the science of friendship. Avoid that tendency to fickleness, and alienation for slight causes, which has disturbed or destroyed so many friendships. Cherish with unvarying regard the friends who have proved themselves faithful, and adopting the precept of Hamlet,

"Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel."

Strive to possess yourselves of the elements of a science, more sublime than love, because less selfish, which is in grief a comforter, in difficult duty a double strength, which has power to heighten joy, to ennoble all good properties, and to fit for the intercourse with pure spirits in a happier clime.

Remember the fine example of Klopstock,

whose confiding simplicity of character prepared him to awaken regard, who was even to the chill atmosphere of fourscore years, surrounded by tender and warmly expressed sympathies, and of whom it was beautifully said, that "all his life he clung to friendship, as the child clings to the breast of its mother."

## LETTER XI.

### CHEERFULNESS.

Among the ingredients of happiness, few are more important than a habit of cheerfulness. Its lineaments are always beautiful. They have a tendency to reproduce themselves. The calm smile often images itself on the brow of another, and the sweet tone, if it fail to call forth one equally sweet, still soothes the ear and lulls the soul with its melody. A melancholy countenance, and a plaintive voice are contagious. "I have always," said the good Vicar of Wakefield, "been an admirer of happy human faces." The sentiment is universal. The pleasure thus derived compensates for the absence of beauty, and supplies the deficiency of symmetry and grace.

Cheerfulness is expected from the young. It is the natural temperament of life's brightest season. We are disappointed when we see a frown or gloom upon those features, which we persuade ourselves should be ever cloudless. It is as if in gathering spring's early violets, we found them thorny, or divested of fragrance. The open, clear glance, the unsuspicious aspect, the smile hovering around the lips of the gentle speaker, and interpret-

ing more perfectly than words, the harmony that dwells within, are inexpressibly cheering to those whom care has depressed, or age furrowed, or suffering taught distrust.

The young, in cultivating those habits which promote cheerfulness, should remember that they are meeting the just demands of the community, paying an appropriate rent for their lodge among the flowers. That the happiness of others, may be thus promoted, will be a strong motive to the amiable and kind, to study those rules on which so valuable a science depends.

A cheerful demeanour is particularly expected of *young ladies*. In their case, its absence is an especial fault. For if, among woman's household duties, it is numbered that she makes others happy, and if, in order to do this successfully, she must in some degree be happy herself, cheerfulness should be early confirmed into habit, and deeply founded in principle.

A contented and grateful disposition is one of the elements of cheerfulness. Keeping our more minute blessings steadily in view, will be found a salutary exercise. Little kindnesses from those around us, should be reciprocated, and returned in the spirit of kindness. Forgetfulness of favours, or any tendency to ingratitude on our part, should be guarded against as an inroad upon justice, and a sure omen of incorrect and unhappy moral tendencies. Recognition of the daily gifts of our unwearied Benefactor, promotes cheerfulness and peace

of mind. Contrast will aid us in their estimation. The pure water, which from its very abundance we cease to value, would be fully appreciated by the traveller parching amid African deserts, and by the poor camel of the caravan. The healthful air, which invigorates every nerve, and for which we fail to thank God, would be hailed by the suffering inmates of some crowded hospital, or the pale prisoner in his loathsome dungeon.

By remembering those whom disease has immoveably chained, or those whose eye and ear, light and sound have forsaken, we better learn to estimate the luxury of motion, and the value of those senses by which we hold communion with nature and with mind. The mansion that affords us shelter, the food that sustains us and with whose reception the beneficent Creator has connected satisfaction, the apparel fashioned to the comfort of the ever-varying seasons, remind many tender hearts of the children of poverty, quickening both liberality to them, and love to the Father of all. The history of despotic governments, of the horrors of war, and the miseries of ignorance and heathenism, should aid in impressing a sense of our own great indebtedness, and in shedding over the face and demeanour the clear sunshine of cheerful gratitude. But, as it is impossible to recount those mercies which are "new every morning and fresh every moment," our whole existence should be pervaded by the spirit which moved the pious poet to exclaim—

"Almighty Friend, henceforth to Thee,  
A hymn of praise my life shall be."

The habit of discovering good qualities in others, is a source of diffusible happiness. Though a knowledge of human nature teaches that the best characters have a mixture of infirmity ; it still admits that in the worst, there are some redeeming virtues. The telescope that reveals the brightness of the most opaque and remote planets, is more valuable than the microscope that detects motes in the sunbeam, and deformed insects feeding even upon the rose's heart. A disposition to dwell on the bright side of character, is like gold to the possessor. One of the principal ingredients in the happiness of childhood, is freedom from suspicion, and kind and loving thoughts toward all. Why might not that sweet disposition be combined with a more extensive intercourse with mankind ?—A habit of searching out the faults of others, like that of complaining of the inconveniences of our lot, grows with indulgence, and is calculated both to increase evil, and to perpetuate its remembrance.

A tendency to slander, destroys innocent cheerfulness, and marks even the countenance with malevolence. The satisfaction which it brings is morbid, and betokens internal disease. To imagine more evil than meets the eye, betrays affinity for it, and to delight to deepen that which forces itself on our observation, marks a fearful degree of moral disease, and contributes to disseminate it. But to "distil out that soul of goodness which is contained

in evil things," is a chymistry worthy of those guardian spirits who heighten the joy of heaven, when "one sinner repenteth." Strive, therefore, as a means of cheerful and happy thought, to palliate rather than to condemn frailty, and so to bring into prominence the good qualities of those with whom you associate, that the mind dwelling in an atmosphere of brightness, may shed on those around, a reflection of its own joy, a faint semblance of that beam, which the prophet bore on his face, when he descended from his mountain-converse with the All-Perfect.

Cheerfulness is promoted by a consciousness of being usefully employed. Active industry is favourable to health and elasticity of spirits. The assurance that our daily pursuits advance the comfort or improvement of others, is a balsam to the heart. That our time, talents, and influence, are devoted to their highest and best ends, is an assurance of inestimable value. It would seem that those engaged in the different departments of education, should therefore evince a sustaining principle of cheerfulness. To advance the intellectual and moral benefit of others, is a blessed mission, and should "wear its jewel" visibly.

The more instructors of youth cultivate a dignified cheerfulness, the more they will extend and deepen their influence. It might seem that *to teach* is the natural province of our sex. And if every young lady, wherever she might be situated, should make it her object to impart to all those younger



or less favoured than herself, who come in contact with her, some portion of the accomplishments, the knowledge, or the piety, that she possesses, the sweet consciousness of not living in vain, would cheer her meditations, and irradiate her countenance and manners with the charm of benevolence

Endeavour to preserve cheerfulness of deportment, under the pressure of disappointment or calamity. "Keep aloof from sadness," says an Icelandick writer of the twelfth century, "for sadness is a sickness of the soul." That principle is weak at the root, which is unable to resist obstacles. The vessel is but ill-constructed that cannot retain its integrity against rough winds or an opposing tide. Life has many ills, but the mind that views every object in its most cheering aspect, and every doubtful dispensation as replete with latent good, bears within itself a powerful and perpetual antidote. The gloomy soul aggravates misfortune, while a cheerful smile often dispels those mists that portend a storm. Form a habit of *being* cheerful under adverse circumstances. "Our happiness," says a fine writer, "is a sacred deposite, for which we must give account." A serene and amiable temper is among its most efficient preservatives. Admiral Collingwood, in his letters to his daughters, says, "I never knew your mother to utter a harsh or hasty thing to any person in my life." Of Archbishop Leighton, it is related, by one qualified to judge, that "during a strict intimacy of many years, he never saw him for one mo-

ment in any other temper than that in which he would wish to live and to die." Though some may, with more ease than others, attain equanimity of character, yet the cheerfulness that surmounts care, disappointment and sorrow, must be the result of cultivated principle, of persevering effort, and the solicited succour of the grace of God.

A good conscience is essential to consistent cheerfulness. "Were thy conscience pure," says the excellent Thomas à Kempis, "thou wouldest be contented in every condition. Thou wouldest be undisturbed by the opinions and reports of men concerning thee;—for their commendations can add nothing to thy goodness, nor their censures take away from it;—*what thou art, thou art*:—nor can the praise of the whole world make thee happier or greater in the sight of God. Thou wilt enjoy tranquillity, if thy heart condemn thee not. Therefore, do not hope to rejoice, but when thou hast done well." A decided preference of the right, though the wrong may be rendered most alluring, and the conviction of having intended to do well, are necessary to self-approval. Success, and the applause of others, may not always bear proportion to the motives that actuate us. We may be sometimes blamed when our designs are pure, or praised when we are not conscious of deserving it. Such results must indeed often happen, since this is a state of probation and not of reward. The *true record* must be kept within. Its appeal is to a tribunal that cannot err. The waiting and trust-

ing spirit, may surely be cheerful. It is a weak faith, that cannot look above mistake and misconception, up to the clear shining of the Sun of righteousness. It is but a decrepit cheerfulness that can walk abroad, only when the breeze is soft, and the path verdant.

We are instructed to believe, that *praise* is the spirit of heaven. Cheerfulness, and giving of thanks, ought therefore to be cultivated by all who have a hope of dwelling there. If we were to take up our residence with distant friends, we would wish to acquire some knowledge of their tastes, that we might so accommodate our own, as to become a congenial inmate. If we were to sojourn in a foreign country, we would not neglect the study of its language, or the means of intercourse with its inhabitants. If the spirit of a clime, where we hope to dwell eternally, is revealed to us, let us not be indifferent to its requisitions. Let us fashion the lineaments of our character, after that bright and glorious pattern—that if we are so happy as to obtain entrance therein, its blissful inhabitants may not be to us as strangers, nor their work a burden;—but we be fitted by the serenity learned on earth, to become “fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

## LETTER XII.

### CONVERSATION.

So great a part of our time is devoted to conversation, and so much has it the power to influence the social feelings and relative duties, that it is important to consider how it may be rendered both agreeable and useful. In all countries where intelligence is prized, a talent for conversation ranks high among accomplishments. To clothe the thoughts in clear and elegant language, and to convey them impressively to the mind of another, is no common attainment.

Conversation to be interesting, should be sustained with animation. Warmth of heart must put in motion the wheels of intellect. The finest sentiments lose their force, if uttered with lassitude and indifference. Still, the most fluent speakers are not always the most agreeable. Great rapidity of enunciation should be avoided. It perplexes minds of slow comprehension, and confuses those which are inured to habits of reflection. It sometimes proceeds from great quickness of perception, and is sometimes an affectation of sprightliness, but will usually be found to produce fatigue, rather than to give pleasure.

A proneness to interrupt others, is still more offensive than excessive volubility. Scarcely any brilliance in conversation can atone for this. It is an infraction of the principle of mutual exchange, on which this department of social intercourse depends. The term itself conveys an idea, if not of equal rights, at least of some degree of reciprocity in the privilege of receiving and imparting thought. Even those who most admire the fluency of an exclusive speaker, will condemn the injustice of the monopoly. They will imagine that they themselves might have uttered a few good things, had they been allowed an opportunity. Perhaps some appropriate remark arose to their lips, but the proper time for uttering it, was snatched away. It is possible that regret for one's own lost sayings, may diminish the effect of even a flood of eloquence. So that piqued self-love will be apt to overpower admiration, and the elegant and indefatigable talker be shunned, except by a few who are silent from dulness, or patient listeners from principle. The encounter of a number of these earnest and fierce speakers, the clamour, the tireless competition, the impossibility of rescuing thought from the confusion of tongues, the utter frustration of the legitimate design of discourse, *to be understood*, would be ludicrous, were it not painfully oppressive to the nerves.

Fluency in conversation must not be assumed as a test of talent. Men of genius and wisdom have been often found deficient in its graces.

Adam Smith ever retained in company the embarrassed manners of a student. Neither Buffon or Rousseau carried their eloquence into society. The silence of the poet Chaucer was held more desirable than his speech. The conversation of Goldsmith did not evince the grace and tenderness that characterize his compositions. Thomson was diffident and often uninteresting. Dante was taciturn, and all the brilliance of Tasso, was in his pen. Descartes seemed formed for solitude. Cowley was a quiet observer, and the spirited Dryden acknowledged that his "conversation was slow and dull, and his humour reserved." Hogarth and Swift were absent-minded, and the studious Thomas Baker said that he was "fit for no communion, save with the dead." Our own Washington, Hamilton and Franklin, were deficient in that fluency which often fascinates a promiscuous circle.

The list might easily be enlarged, but enough instances have been adduced, to console those who happen not to excel in this accomplishment, and to assure them that if sometimes constrained to be silent, they are at least kept in countenance by a goodly company.

As Pythagoras imposed on those who would be initiated into his philosophy, a long term of silence, so they who would acquire the art of conversation, should *first learn to listen*. To do this with an appearance of unwearied attention, and as far as possible with an expression of interested feeling

on the countenance, is a species of amiable politeness, to which all are susceptible. It is peculiarly soothing to men of eminent attainments, or refined sensibility, and is a kind of delicate deference, which the young are bound to pay to their superiors in age.

Another mode of imparting pleasure in conversation, is to lead others to such subjects as are most congenial to their taste, or on which they possess the most extensive information. From this will arise a double benefit. *They* will be satisfied, and *you* will reap the fruits of their knowledge. This was one of the modifications of benevolence practised by the late Dr. Dwight, himself one of the most accomplished and eloquent men in conversation, whom our country, or any other country, has ever produced. That you may observe this rule, with regularity, do not permit yourself to estimate too lightly the attainments of those, whom education has less favoured than yourself. Among them you will often discover strong common sense, an acquaintance with practical things, and a sound judgment of the "plain intent of life," in which minds of greater refinement may be deficient. This meek search after knowledge from the humblest sources, is graceful in the young; and the virtuous, however laborious may be their lot, or obscure their station, are deserving of such respect, and made happier by it.

The late Dr. Rush, was pronounced by a gentleman highly endued with cultivated taste, and

knowledge of human nature, "one of the most interesting men in conversation, that our country has produced. In analyzing the secret of his powers, it seemed that his *art of pleasing consisted in making others pleased with themselves*. He never descended to flattery. His compliments came rather from an approving eye and manner, than from his lips. His ready tact seemed instinctively to discover, the subjects on which you were best qualified to converse. To these subjects, he would adroitly and pleasantly lead the way. Then, as if by magic, you would find yourself at home in his presence, moving freely, and with exhilarated spirits in your own native element; and when you left him, you could not fail to add, to other valuable acquisitions made through him, an increased fund of self-respect."

Those who would please others, should never talk for display. The vanity of shining in conversation, is usually subversive of its own desires. However your qualifications may transcend those of the persons who surround you, it is both unwise and unkind to obtrude them upon their notice, or betray disregard of their opinion. It is never politic to humble those whom you seek to conciliate. It is a good rule not to speak much of yourself, or your own concerns, unless in the presence of friends, who prompt these subjects, or whose advice you are anxious to obtain. It was among the amiable traits in the character of Sir Walter Scott, never voluntarily to allude to those splendid pro-



ductions of his genius, which were winning the wonder and applause of every clime. There is a politeness, almost allied to piety, in putting out of view our own claims to distinction, and bringing forward the excellences of others.

Perhaps, the great secret of pleasing in conversation, is to make others pleased with themselves. Any superiority, therefore, which we may chance to possess, should be laid aside, as if entirely forgotten. "I never allude to my own works," said Corneille, "but amuse my companions about such matters as they like to hear. My talent consists not in making them feel that I have any, but in showing them that they have." How much more amiable is such a course, than that perpetual effort to dazzle, which encumbers society with levity, weariness, and disappointed vanity.

But in studying to render conversation agreeable, let us not forget that it should have a higher object than merely the art of pleasing. It was a noble rule of the celebrated Cotton Mather, "never to enter any company, where it was proper for him to speak, without endeavouring to be useful in it." Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe, who eminently possessed the talent of conversation, and so united it with an amiable disposition, that it was said of her, she was never known to have uttered an unkind, or ill-natured remark, made it the means of moral improvement to others, by commending in their presence, some persons distinguished by the particular virtue, which she desired them to imi-

tate. Thus she often led to the formation of good habits, and by her eloquence, reformed and elevated the characters of those around her.

Avoid exaggeration in discourse. Those of lively imaginations are very prone to this fault. When the addition of a few circumstances, or the colouring of a single speech, would so embellish a narrative, their veracity is not proof against the temptation.

Spare to use the language of flattery. Truth seems to abandon the guidance of those young persons, who indulge much in its dialect. Every habit of hyperbolical expression, impairs confidence. Obtain an accurate knowledge of the meaning of words, and of the different shades of those reputed synonymous. Much carelessness, and superfluous verbiage in conversation, might be prevented by a habit of strict definition of terms, and a precise adaptation of them to the facts which are stated, or the sentiments which are conveyed. The study of etymology might not only be brought into daily practical use by ladies, but be rendered a moral benefit. Yet in these days of high intellectual cultivation, in which females so liberally partake, the sacrifice of veracity in common discourse, cannot be resolved into ignorance of the import of language, so correctly as into the desire of shining, or making amusement at the expense of higher things. "It is very difficult," says the excellent Mrs. Hannah More, "for persons of great liveliness to restrain themselves

within the sober limits of strict veracity, either in their assertions or narrations, especially when a little undue indulgence of fancy is apt to secure for them the praise of genius and spirit; and this restraint is one of the earliest principles which should be worked into a youthful mind." Without sincerity, the intercourse of the lips will be but "as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal," and dear, indeed, must be that reputation for wit, which is purchased by the forfeiture of integrity.

You are doubtless aware that our sex have been accused of a tendency to remark with severity upon the foibles of character. It has been gravely asserted that we were prone to evil-speaking. *Is it so?* Let us candidly canvass the point. We may have temptations to this vice, peculiar to ourselves. We have more leisure for conversation than men. Our range of subjects is more limited. The multifarious pursuits of business and politics, or the labours of scientific and professional studies, engross their thoughts, and necessarily lead them to more elevated and expansive channels. Women, acting in a narrower sphere, examine with extreme ardour, whatever falls under their observation, or enters into competition with them. When employments weary, or amusements fail, *character* is a favourite field in which to expatiate. By nature they are gifted with a facility for reading its idioms. But if they indulge themselves in searching not only its weaknesses—if they form a taste particularly for its deformities, and feeding, like

the hyena, upon its fleshless, lifeless carcase, are they not in danger of perverting the tides of benevolent feeling, and of tinging the fountains of the heart with bitterness?

It is very difficult to ascertain whether the faults of others are presented to us without exaggeration. So little do human beings understand the motives of others, that actions may be blamed by men, which the recording angel exults, as he writes in the pure record of Heaven.

Yet, if we are sure that those whom we hear censured are quite as guilty as they are represented, is not the call on us rather for pity than for punishment? Is it not to be inferred that the community will take care to visit the error with its full penalty, and that it may be safe for us to withhold our smiting, when so many scourges are uplifted? Perhaps, even the measure of Jewish infliction, "thirty stripes, *save one*," may be transcended, if we add our stroke.

Surely, no class of our fellow-creatures, are more in need of pity, than those who have fallen into error, and are suffering its consequences. "Consider," says the excellent Caroline Fry, "the dangers, the sorrows, that lie in the path of all, to their eternal home—the secret pangs, the untold agonies, the hidden wrongs. Thus the heart will grow soft with pity towards our kind. How can I tell what that censured person suffers? That fault will cost dear enough, without my aid. So, you will fear, by a harsh word to add to that

which is too much already, as you would shrink from putting your finger into a fresh wound."

From the danger of evil-speaking, there is for you, my dear young friends, many sources of protection. Education has provided you with a shield against this danger. The wide circle of the sciences, the whole range of literature, the boundless world of books, open for you sources of conversation, as innumerable as they are sublime. Subjects to which your mothers were strangers, are as familiar to "your lips as household words." You have no need to dissect character. You have no excuse for confining your attention to the frailties of your associates. What is it to you who wears an ill-assorted riband, or a tasteless garment; or who takes the lead in fashion, to you, who can solve at ease, the most intricate problem of Euclid, and walk with Newton among the stars? What a paucity of judgment, what a perversion of intellect does it discover, to cast away the treasures of education, and place yourself on a level with the neediest mind. It is like parting with your birthright, and not receiving even the poor payment of a "mess of pottage." If there has ever been just cause for this serious charge of a love of calumny upon our whole sex, it behooves the young females of the present generation to arise and wipe it away. In those places, where danger has been discovered to exist, apply the remedy. Avoid as far as possible, all personal conversation. But when character is necessarily the subject of discussion, show

yourselves the gentle excusers of error, and the advocates of all who need defence. It was once my happiness to associate with some young people, who were in love with goodness, and in fear lest the habit of evil-speaking might unawares gain victory over them. They said: "We will form ourselves into a society against detraction. If we asperse any person, or if we neglect to defend the absent when they are defamed, we will pay a fine, to be appropriated to the relief of the poor." Truly, the purse for the poor flourished, and so did the virtues of those lovely and kind-hearted beings. The mother of one of them inquired, for she had not heard of the existence of such a society, "What is the reason that C. never joins when any one is blamed, but tries so constantly to excuse all, or when that is impossible, says nothing?" A sweet comment upon their institution. It so happened that it was organized on the shortest day of the year, and if its effects on all its members were as happy, as on this individual, they will have cause to remember it with gratitude to the longest day of their lives.

It is not proposed that you should surrender a correct judgment, or attempt to applaud the vicious. Yet do not testify too much complacency in the condemnation even of those who deserve it. You cannot compute the strength of their temptations, or be positive that you would have offered a firmer resistance. Be tender of the reputation of your companions. Do not suppose that by detracting

from their merits, you establish your own. Join cheerfully in their praises, even should they be called forth by qualities or accomplishments in which you are deficient. Speak with severity of none. The office of censor is hardly safe for those who are themselves "compassed about with infirmity."—"Slander," says the excellent Saurin, "is a vice which strikes a double blow, wounding both him who commits, and him against whom it is committed." Those who possess the deepest knowledge of human nature, are the least violent in blaming its frailties. Be assured that you testify your discrimination more by discovering the *good* than the *evil* among your fellow-creatures, so imperfect are even the best, so much alloy mingles with earth's finest gold.

We have now inquired, with regard to conversation in general, how it may be rendered agreeable, safe, and subservient to utility. Before we dismiss the subject, let us turn our attention to that modification of it, which regards the intercourse of young ladies, with those of their own age, among the other sex. This is a point of no minor importance. From your style of conversation and manners, they are accustomed to gather their most indelible impressions, not merely of talents, but of those secret springs which modify feeling, and character, and happiness. Their courtesy yields to you the choice of subjects, and induces a general acquiescence in your sentiments. But are you aware that all these circumstances are scrutinized

freely in your absence, and that while you are flattering yourself with having dexterously sustained your part, cool criticism may be resolving your wisdom into vanity, or associating your wit with ill-nature ?

I would not seek to disguise the degree of influence, which, in the radiant morning of your days, you possess over young men. It is exceedingly great. I beg you to consider it in its full import, in all its bearings, and to "use it like an angel."

You have it in your power to give vigour to their pursuit of respectability, to fix their attention on useful knowledge, to fortify their wavering opinions, and to quicken or retard their progress in the path of benevolence and piety. You have it also in your power to interrupt their habits of industry and application, to encourage foppishness in dress, to inspire contempt of a just economy and plain exterior, and to lead them to cultivate levity of deportment, or to seek for variety of amusements, at the expense of money, which perhaps they can ill afford to spend, and of time, which it is madness to waste. How important, my dear young friends, that the influence thus intrusted to you, be rationally, and kindly, and religiously used.

In your conversation with young men, avoid frivolity. Do not, for the sake of being called sociable, utter sound without sense. There seems implanted in some minds a singular *dread of silence*. Nothing is in their opinion, so fearful as a *pause*. It must be broken, even if the result is to



speaking foolishness. Yet to the judicious, the ~~pass~~ would be less irksome than the folly that succeeds it. Neither reserve nor pedantry, in mixed society are desirable, but a preference of such subjects as do not discredit the understanding and taste of an educated young lady. Dress, and the various claims of the candidates for the palm of beauty and fashion, with the interminable gossip of reputed courtships, or incipient coquetries, are but too prone to predominate. Perhaps you would scarcely imagine, that by indulging much in these topics, you are supposed to furnish a key to your own prevailing tastes. Still less would you be disposed to believe the freedom of remark to which levity of deportment exposes you, even among those young gentlemen who are most willing to promote it. This disposition to frivolity in conversation, repeatedly occupied the elegant and re-proving pen of Addison. "If," said he, "we observe the conduct of the fair sex, we find that they choose rather to associate with persons who resemble themselves in that light and volatile humour which is natural to them, than with such as are qualified to moderate and counterbalance it. When, therefore, we see a fellow loud and talkative, full of insipid life and laughter, we may venture to pronounce him a female favourite."

I trust, my young friends, that nothing in your deportment will ever authorize a conclusion like this. Yet, if a young man of good education, refined taste, and elevated morality, chooses in your

company trifling subjects, or descends often to levity, pause, and inquire of yourself *why it is so?*—whether he supposes this deportment most congenial to you, and what there is in your conduct which might warrant such an opinion.

There were both good sense, and knowledge of human nature, in the maxims given by a German author to his daughter :—"Converse always with your female friends, as if a gentleman were of the party : and with young men, as if your female companions were present." Avoid the dangerous license of conversation, both in variety of subject, and freedom of remark. Extreme delicacy on these points is expected by correct judges, and should always characterize an educated young lady.

I would not desire that conversation should be fettered by restraint, or paralyzed by heartless ceremony. But I would have the dignity of the sex maintained by its fairest and most fascinating representatives. I grieve to see folly sanctioned by the lips of beauty.

Conversation need not be divested of intelligence, by the vague fear of preciseness or pedantry. It ought to be a delightful and improving intercourse between intellectual and immortal beings. To attain excellence in it, an assemblage of qualifications is requisite ; disciplined intellect, to think clearly, and to clothe thought with propriety and elegance ; knowledge of human nature, to suit subject to character ; true politeness, to prevent

giving pain; a deep sense of morality, to preserve the dignity of speech, and a spirit of benevolence to neutralize its asperities and sanctify its powers.

It requires good talents, a good education, and a good heart: the "charity that thinketh no evil," and the piety which breathes good will to man, because it is at peace with its Maker. No wonder that so few excel in what requires such rare combinations. Yet be not discouraged in your attempts to obtain so valuable an accomplishment, since it is the medium by which knowledge is communicated, affection enkindled, sorrow comforted, error reclaimed, and piety incited to go on her way rejoicing.

I beseech you abuse it not. Every night, in the silence of your apartment, let the heart question the lips of their part in the day's doings. Recall the instances in which they have been trifling, profitless, or recreant to the law of kindness, and thus gather deeper contrition for the prayer with which you resign yourself to sleep. Lest this work be done lightly or carelessly, endeavour to make it a faint emblem of that tribunal before which we must all stand at last; and engrave indelibly on your memory the solemn assurance that for "*every idle word, we must give account in the day of judgment.*"

## LETTER XIII.

### BENEVOLENCE.

PERMIT me to press upon your attention a science at once simple and sublime ; of easy attainment, yet inexhaustible in its resources, and in its results boundless as Eternity. Some sciences require superior intellect, and severe study, yet to their adepts bring little, save pride and ostentation. But in this, the humblest and the youngest may become students, and find blessed fruits springing up, and ripening in their own bosoms. It is doubtless evident to you, that I speak of the science of *doing good*. Yet I would not confine the term to its common acceptation of alms-giving. This is but a single branch of the science, though an important one. A more extensive and correct explanation is, to strive to increase the happiness, and diminish the amount of misery, among our fellow-creatures, by every means in our power. This is a powerful antidote to selfishness, that baneful and adhesive disease of our corrupt nature, or to borrow the forcible words of Pascal, that "bias towards ourselves, which is the spring of all disorder." Benevolence multiplies our sources of pleasure, for in the happiness of all whom we

bless, we are blessed also. It elevates our enjoyments, by calling into exercise generous motives, and disinterested affections.

Lord Bacon, that star of the first magnitude, among the constellations of mind, says, that he early "took *all knowledge* to be his province." Will *you* not take *all goodness* to be your province? It is the wiser choice, for "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." Knowledge must "perish in the using," but goodness, like its Author, is eternal.

Dear young friend, whose eye, undimmed by the sorrows of time, is now resting upon this page, suffer me, from the experience of an older and earth-worn traveller, to urge you to *bind yourself an apprentice to the trade of doing good*. He will be your Master, whose "mercies are new every morning, and fresh every moment." He will give you a tender and sustaining example, who came to "seek and to save that which was lost." They, too, will be your teachers, those bright-winged ministering spirits, who hold gentle guardianship over us, their weaker brethren, lest we "dash our foot against a stone," whose harps are tremulous with joy when one sinner repenteth. The wise and good of all realms and nations, those who have gone to rest, and those who still labour, you may count as your companions, a vast and glorious assembly.

Resolve, therefore, *this day*, that you will not live exclusively for your own gratification, but that

the good of others, shall be an incentive to your studies, your exertions, your prayers. If you will be persuaded thus to enroll yourselves among the students of Heaven, consider attentively your own powers, situation, and opportunities of doing good.

Take a view of the ground which you occupy. Look around on every member of your own family. Contemplate all among whom you reside, and with whom you particularly associate. Are any ignorant, whom you might instruct ; unhappy, whom you might console ; in error, whom you might reclaim ? Make acquaintance with the poor. See with your own eyes, the deficiency of their accommodations, and the nature of their sorrows. The directions given by the father of Louis XVI. to the tutor of his children, reflect more honour upon him than the circumstance of his royal birth : " Take them to the cottages of the peasantry. I will have them see and taste the black bread which they eat. I insist on their handling the straw that serves the poorest for a bed. Let them weep ; learn them to weep ; for the prince who has never shed tears for the woes of others, can never make a good king."

From among the many charitable societies of the day, select one, whose design is most congenial to your feelings, or most approved by your older friends. Enroll yourself among its members, and study its management, and become familiar with the detail of its operations. Thus you will preserve your own interest from languishing,

and gather instruction from the associated wisdom of others. Whatever income you may possess, whatever stipend is allowed you, set apart *one tenth* for charitable purposes. This, surely, will not seem to you a large proportion. Some benevolent persons have devoted a fifth of their possessions to the poor. The pious Countess Warwick could not be satisfied without distributing one third of her large income to the wants of the distressed. To a young lady, a sweet disciple in the school of charity, and now, I trust, a participant in the bliss of angels, who inquired what proportion of her fortune she should devote to sacred uses, I suggested a *tenth*. But she replied, "I like better the rule of the publican, 'Lord, I give *half* of my goods, I give unto the poor.'" The excellent Mrs. Isabella Graham was in the habit of devoting a tenth part of her possessions to charitable uses, under every reverse of fortune. On one occasion, after the sale of some property £1000 was brought her. So large a sum was new to her, and fearing the selfishness which often attends the acquisition of riches, she exclaimed: "Quick! let me appropriate my *tenth*, before my heart grows hard."

For the division of a tenth of our substance, there seems a kind of warrant in Scripture, by the title which the Almighty commanded his chosen people to render. "God," says an ancient writer, "commandeth the seventh part of our time, and the tenth of our fortune, but man, in his sabbath

less pursuit of the world, is prone to give him neither."

Whatever proportion you decide to consecrate, keep in a separate purse, never to be entrenched on for other purposes. If it be only a few cents, be faithful; God can make it more, if He sees you are a good steward. Ponder the means of rendering it the most widely and permanently useful. Study the *economy of charity*. By the exercise of correct judgment, one dollar may do more good than ten times the sum without it. As far as possible, increase your portion for the poor, by your own industry. "Shall we call ourselves *benevolent*, says the Baron Degerando, when the gifts we bestow do not cost us a single privation?" To ask your parents or friends for money, and give it carelessly to the poor, is casting into God's treasury that which costs you nothing. Either deduct it from your regular allowance, or obtain it by your own efforts. There are many kinds of elegant needle-work, and ingenious device, by which young ladies may furnish the means of charity, and at the same time confirm industrious habits. I have known some, who by rising an hour earlier in the morning than usual, and making some garment which was needed in the family, received from their mother, the price that would have paid the seamstress, and thus earned the delight of making some shivering child more comfortable for the winter. If your time is much at your own disposal, steadily employ one hour out of the twenty



four, in working for some charitable object. More will be thus accomplished, than you would at first believe. To aid in educating a child, is one of the most commendable and profitable designs. Facilities are recently afforded for doing this for the children of heathen lands, in the families of Christian teachers. This seems to be emphatically, "saving a soul from death." I have seen a young lady, measuring out by an hour-glass, this consecrated portion of the day, with her hands busily employed, and the sweetest expression upon her mind-illuminated face. And I remembered how tuneful among the fragrant groves of Ceylon, would rise the hymn of praise, from the little being whom she was helping to the knowledge of God, and the love of a Saviour. I reflected too, with gratitude, that at the close of the year, when she reviewed its scenes, and every day passed before her, with its crown of industry and bounty, that she would gather more true delight from their simple record, than from the tinselled recollections of gayety, and fashion. Do you think that you are too young to enter on an organized system of doing good? I knew a school of fifteen members, whose ages ranged from six to sixteen years, though the greatest proportion were between ten and thirteen. They were smitten with the love of doing good, and associated themselves into a society for that purpose. In a period of little more than two years, they completed for the poor, 160 garments, many of them carefully altered or judi-

ciously repaired, from their own wardrobe. Among these, were 35 pairs of stockings, knit without sacrifice of time, during the reading and recitation of a course of history, which formed a principal part of their afternoon study. That they might render their monthly contributions the fruit of their own industry, they employed almost incredible diligence, as lessons in different sciences were daily required to be studied out of school hours. By rising an hour earlier in the morning, time was gained for the various uses of the needle, by which the pleasure of alms-giving was earned. Among their contributions, I recollect ten dollars to an asylum for the deaf and dumb, five to the schools newly established among the Cherokees, and ten in the purchase of religious books, for the children of poverty and ignorance. The afternoon of Saturday, was the only period of recess from school, during the week. This single interval of leisure, they voluntarily devoted to their chosen occupation of *doing good*.

When I have found them convened in their school-room, on this their only afternoon allotted to recreation, and observed them, instead of being engaged like others of their age, in useless sports, executing works of charity, busily employed with their needles, planning how some garment might be best accommodated to its object, or some little contribution rendered subservient to the greatest good, their eyes sparkling with the heart's best gladness, and their sweet voices echoing its mel-

ody, I could not but trust that some pure spirit of Heaven's prompting hovered over them. There was an interesting period in the history of this little institution, when its almoners first commenced distributing the "coats and garments," which, like Dorcas, they had made with their own hands, for the poor. Then they occasionally discovered instances of suffering which agitated their sensibilities, sometimes learned the lesson that gratitude is not always proportioned to benefits, and often returned exulting in the truth that "it is more blessed to *give* than to *receive*." No more interesting report of these visits of charity was ever given, than by one lovely girl of nine years of age, who was deprived of the powers of hearing and speech. Yet though her lips the providence of Almighty God had sealed, her eye, her gesture, her finely-varied countenance, glowing with the spirit of benevolence, left nothing for oral language to utter. At this period, the winter was peculiarly severe, and the wretchedness of the poor, proportionably increased. She had accompanied another almoner to the miserable lodging of a family recently removed from a clime where an extreme of penury sometimes exists, which, in our favoured state of society is seldom known. She expressed strong commiseration that there was so little fire, when the wind was raging without, and the snow deep upon the earth, and that a sick babe seemed to have neither medicine nor food. Her description of the thin and tattered garments of the

mother, and of her face, marked at once with sorrow and with patience, evinced that not the slightest circumstance had escaped her discrimination, while the tears of exquisite pity trembling in her eye, proved that her heart was as little accustomed to the woes of her fellow-creatures, as to their vices. I have detained you longer than I intended, with the picture of this little group. It furnishes an example in point, that the mind, in its early stages, is capable, both of the systematick arrangement, and the judicious economy of charity. Often, while gazing with delight on the circle I have attempted to describe, I fondly believed that the habits which they were then forming would have a lasting influence over their future character, and that wherever their lot might be cast, they would each of them be blessings in their day and generation.

In this, our highly-privileged age, the modes of doing good are exceedingly numerous. Be thankful to any one who furnishes you with one of these opportunities. By a man, who was distinguished in the science of charity, it was very early in life adopted as a maxim, that "capacity and opportunity to do good, not only give a right to do it, but make the doing it a duty." Faithfully did he observe this precept. He began in the family of his father, by doing all the good in his power to brothers and sisters, and domesticks. After he became engaged in the duties of life, and eminent in the labours of a sacred profession, every day was

distinguished by either devising or executing some design for the benefit of others. Those who intimately knew him, assert, that not a day was suffered to pass, without his having devoted some part of his income to pious purposes.

Undoubtedly, one of the best modes of assisting the poor, is through their own industry. This, like the voluntary co-operation of the patient, renders the remedies of the physician doubly effectual. It elevates character, and prevents that humiliating consciousness of dependance, which bows a noble spirit, and renders a tame one abject. It is peculiarly desirable that children should be withheld from habits of mendicity. They interfere with principles of integrity, and with a healthful self-respect. Aid offered to a mother, in the form of some employment, where her children may be associated with her, so as to increase and share her earnings, is most efficient benevolence.

A lady of wealth became the resident of a village where there was much poverty. In her modes of relief she studied how to afford aliment to industry and to hope, rather than to foster helplessness, or call forth a supine gratitude. Her excellent judgment suggested a happy expedient. She offered to supply those females who came to her for assistance, with materials for spinning. The proposition was generally accepted thankfully. When the yarn was brought, she paid for it promptly, adding a trifle more than they had been accustomed to receive. This caused her to

be soon thronged with applicants. Weavers as well as spinners presented themselves, and the busy sound of the wheel and loom, rose cheerfully from many an humble habitation. Domestick fabricks of great durability, and suited to the varied wants of families, were thus completed. Such a proportion of them as were needed by her manufacturers, she disposed of to them, at a lower price than they could elsewhere be obtained, and thus had the pleasure of seeing households, once comparatively idle or improvident, neatly clothed by the work of their own hands. The intercourse which was thus promoted, familiarized her with the situation of families, and enabled her to make appropriate gifts of books to children, cordials to the sick, and comforts to the aged. Aiming still at a more expansive benevolence, yet avoiding ostentation, she selected from among the more intelligent matrons, a few, with whom she consulted monthly, on the best means of rendering her plans effectual. She not only derived advantage from their practical good sense, and thorough knowledge of common affairs, but communicated happiness by her condescension, and by the feeling that they were found worthy to be associated with a superior mind, in the science of doing good. Perceiving that there were in the village some petty disaffections, arising from sectarian jealousies, she arranged that each denomination should be represented at this humble board of managers, and the pleasant intercourse into which they were thus drawn, at their

monthly visits of consultation, dissolved prejudice and fostered kind affections. In process of time, she added a school, for which she provided a competent instructress, often visiting it herself, and statedly distributing premiums to the most deserving. By this steady consecration of her influence to the best objects, the face of the village was changed, and many hearts poured blessings upon their benefactress.

The gift of useful books, may also be ranked among the most unexceptionable forms of charity. It would be well to choose none for that purpose, which you have not first carefully perused. Thus, you will not only enrich your own mind from their treasures, but become qualified to judge of their adaptation to particular stations, characters, and states of mind. The Sacred Scriptures, and simple treatises enforcing its precepts, without any mixture of sectarian bitterness, will doubtless occupy a prominent place in your library for distribution. Biographies of persons, illustrious for benevolence and piety, will be found to exercise a highly beneficial influence. Make these gifts to such as you have reason to think will put them to the best use. To the young, it will sometimes be well to lend them, on condition, that at returning them, they will render you some account of their contents. This will generally secure an attentive perusal, and also give you the opportunity of profitable conversation, either to engrave some precept on their memory, or recommend some exam-

ple to their imitation. Lay useful volumes in the way of domesticks, who may thus be induced to read them. Who can tell how much good may result from a hint, or train of thought thus suggested? Dr. Franklin, so eminent for publick spirit, and so distinguished in distant lands for his designs of utility, acknowledges: "If I have ever been a useful citizen, the publick owe the advantage of it to a small book, which I met with when a boy, entitled, 'Essays to do Good,' written by the Rev. Dr. Cotton Mather. It had been so little regarded by its former possessor, that several leaves were torn out, but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking, as to have an influence on my conduct through life: for I have always set a greater value on the character of the *doer of good*, than any other kind of reputation."

The missionary zeal of Henry Martyn, which left his name as a burning light among the churches, was 'enkindled by a perusal of the life of David Brainerd. Samuel J. Mills, the pioneer of mercy to long-neglected Africa, and Fisk, who in his labours of love, followed his Master's footsteps from despised Nazareth, to the vales of Bethany, ascended breezy Olivet, and wept among the shades of Gethsemane, derived their prompting impulse from the same book. Nor will it be possible to compute, until the scrutiny of the last account, how much of the wisdom of the truly great, of the virtue of those who have been benefactors to mankind, or of the piety of the saint who hath



entered into bliss, has been the fruit of some silent and eloquent page, perhaps accidentally read, or gratuitously presented.

When I look back upon the sheltered and flowery path of childhood, one image is ever there, vivid and cherished above all others. It is of hoary temples, and a brow furrowed by more than four-score winters, yet to me more lovely than the bloom of beauty, or the freshness of youth, for it is associated with the benevolence of an angel. Among the tireless acts of bounty, which rendered her name a watchword in the cells of poverty, and her house a beacon-light to the broken in heart, were the gift of books, and the education of indigent children. On stated days, the children of the neighbourhood were gathered around her, fed at her table, made happy by her kindness, instructed from her lips, and encouraged to read and understand the books with which her library was stored for their use. Surely, in some of those hearts, the melody of that voice, speaking of things that "pertain unto the kingdom of God," is still treasured; among the eyes that were then raised to her with affectionate reverence, some must still delight to restore her image, as well as that which now fills with the tear of an undying gratitude.

That a desire of goodness may not evaporate in empty protestations, or lose itself in desultory paths, let us endeavour to mark out a map to regulate its course. A system, adapted like the fol-

lowing, to every day in the week, may help both to define duty, and to secure perseverance :—

*Sunday.*—What shall I do to manifest my gratitude to my Almighty Benefactor ? Shall I not, on this hallowed day, abstain from worldly pursuits and conversation, study his holy word, recount his mercies with a thankful spirit, and solicit his blessing on all the employments and changes of the week ?

*Monday.*—What good can I do for my parents, or friends older than myself, to whom I am indebted ? Can I perform any office conducive to their comfort, or signalize, by any increase of respect or tenderness, my obedience and affection ?

*Tuesday.*—How can I advance the improvement of my brothers and sisters, or the servants, or any other member of the family ?

*Wednesday.*—Can I exert any influence over my companions, neighbours or intimate friends, to read some useful book, and make its contents the subject of conversation, or to perform some good work ?

*Thursday.*—Are there any poor whom I may visit—sick, whom I may assist—sorrowful, with whom I may sympathize ? Have I no portion to carry to the destitute—no message of comfort from Heaven, to those who are in adversity ?

*Friday.*—Are there any who feel unkindly towards me, and is it in my power to render them any friendly office ? Let me strive to return good for evil, if it be only by an increased kindness and courtesy of deportment.

*Saturday.*—What can I do for my own spiritual improvement? Let me in solitude take a review of my conduct during the week, comparing each day with the resolutions which were adopted to guide it. From my omissions may I learn humility and wisdom, and by self-communion and prayer, gather strength to pass another week more as I shall wish I had, when the close of life approaches.

As a part of the science which we contemplate, let us now bestow some attention on the *manner* of doing good. In imparting relief to the poor, always regard their feelings. Let the law of kindness dwell on your lips whenever you address them. Are we better than they, because a larger proportion of this world's fleeting possessions have fallen to our share? He who "maketh us to differ," will surely be displeased, if there is pride in our heart, or unkindness on our lips, towards our poor brother. Do good without seeking a return, even of grateful acknowledgment. Disinterestedness is essential to proficiency in this science. What reward did Howard expect, when he resigned the ease of affluence, and encountered hardships and peril of life, "to dive into the depth of dungeons—to plunge into the infection of hospitals—to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain—to take the gauge of misery, depression and contempt—to remember the forgotten—to attend to the neglected—to visit the forsaken—and to compare and collate the distresses of all

men in all countries?" Verily, his reward is in heaven.

Not only must you persevere in good offices, without looking for a return, but even should ingratitude be your portion. It may sometimes happen, that the most laborious efforts for the good of others are misunderstood, misconstrued, or repaid with indifference and dislike. Still hold on your course, with an unchanged mind. Your object is not the applause of men, neither should their injustice deter you. You have taken Him for your pattern, who "sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, and doeth good unto the unthankful and evil."

In your charities avoid ostentation. It is exceedingly disgusting to make allusions to them, as if anxious for observation and praise. Never speak of them at all, unless explanation is necessary. You may excite your young companions to similar efforts, without blazoning your own deeds. There is a sacred secrecy in true charity, which he, who violates, hath mistaken its nature. Scripture defines it, in the figurative injunction, "not to let the left hand know what the right hand doeth." God, whose eye is upon the soul, and who weigheth its motives of action, perceiveth, that unless charity dwell with humility, its deeds are nothing worth. The most benevolent, have ever been the most humble.

There are certain classes of benevolent deeds, which fall so peculiarly within the province of fe-

males, as to have obtained the name of feminine charities. I allude to the relief of the ,famishing, and the care of the sick.

Indeed the very etymology of the word *lady*, which has been resolved into a Saxon term, composed of *loaf*, and to *serve*, signifies that dealing food to the hungry was deemed so essential a feature in her character, that the *giver of the loaf*, and the *lady*, became synonymous. In the days of primitive Christianity, ladies of the highest rank were often found at the bedside of the humblest sufferer, meekly ministering to their necessities. The example of the sisters of a sect, differing from our own, deserves the tribute of our respect and admiration. The nuns, attached to the Romish faith, have long been eminent for their services to sick and dying strangers : they have been found in hospitals, and amid the ravages of pestilence, fearless of contagion, and unconscious of fatigue, smoothing the sleepless pillow of disease, and never deserting the sufferer, though forsaken by all beside, until death comes to his release. Justly have they earned the appellation of "sisters of charity," and let us gladly render praise where it is due, and be quickened to emulation in the path of goodness, even by those, whose opinions may differ from our own.

An ancient writer has styled the poor, "the receivers of Christ's rents." It would seem that he had constituted them his representatives. In soothing the grief of his disciples, at their approachin

separation, he said : "*Me* ye have not always, but the *poor* are always with you, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good." An obligation is thus created, to extend to them the same compassion, which we would have shown to our Saviour, had we been permitted to hear from his lips the assertion, that "he had not where to lay his head." If, therefore, we admit the proposition, that the "poor are the receivers of Christ's rents," there is no room left for exultation in our acts of bounty. Is there any merit in the payment of a just debt ? "Verily, boasting is excluded." The call is for gratitude, that we are allowed the privilege. "The poor," said the venerable Bishop Wilson, "receive at our hands the rights and dues, belonging unto God.—We must have a care of defrauding them." The mother of the Chevalier Bayard, in her advice to him, says : "Be bountiful, of the goods that God shall give you, to the poor and needy, for to give for his honour's sake, never made any man poor ; and believe me, my son, the alms that you shall dispense, will greatly profit both your body and soul."

Mankind are like one great family, dividing among each other the gifts of a common parent. Those who are permitted to *impart*, should thank him with a cheerful and humble spirit. The interchange of benefits, the communion of giving and receiving, creates some of the best affections of which our nature is capable. The generous sympathy—the active benevolence—the mutual de-

pendance, which are thus awakened and confirmed, are powerful preparatives for heartfelt piety. So that *doing good* is one of the legitimate paths to *being good*. Therefore, have I so much pressed it upon your susceptible hearts, dear young friends, now, in life's sunny morning, while God is waiting to be gracious. But now I must quit this delightful subject, lest your patience refuse longer to bear with me.

In the fabulous record of ancient times, it is stated that when the name of Plutarch was mentioned, the echo replied, *Philosophy*: so when you shall slumber beneath the clods of the valley, and your names are uttered by the living, may the response be in many hearts, *Benevolence*

## LETTER XIV.

### SELF-CONTROL.

THAT self-regulating power, by which the affections and passions are subjugated to the dictates of duty, and the precepts of inspiration, should be assiduously cultivated by woman. Appointed all her life, to be "under tutors and governors," both her comfort and safety require, that the principle of discipline should be rooted in her heart. As authority is best exercised, by those who have themselves learned subordination, so she should govern herself, that she may be better able to obey. As the strength of nations, is in the unity of individuals—so the beauty of a well-balanced character, may be traced back to the element of self-control.

Other checks are of unequal operation. The eye of authority cannot always be vigilant. The heart that we delight to make happy, cannot always be near. The love of popularity may create an artificial goodness, and stir up hypocrisy to adorn a "whited sepulchre." But that voice which composes the warring factions of the soul, commands silence when Reason speaks, and enforces obedience when Virtue lifts her sceptre, must derive its strength from above. Such a regimen as



promotes this great result, should be steadily pursued by the young.

Submission to parents, teachers and superiors, harmony with brothers, sisters, and friends, prepare the way for those more arduous relative duties which devolve upon our sex: and all are rendered comparatively easy to her, whose heart is habitually governed by the understanding. I do not say that these are ever so perfectly discharged, that at the close of any day there will be no room for regret or compunction. The record of the best day on earth will but teach her who measures deed and motive by the "length and breadth of a law divine," to lay her lip in the dust. Still this painful consciousness is salutary. It may stimulate to new exertion, while it levels the fabricks of pride. We should be *convinced* of infirmity, but not *contented* with it.

Calmness and equanimity are excellent virtues in our sex, and the more so, as our sphere of action is exposed to those lesser causes of irritation which more effectually, than great afflictions, try the temper of the soul. We think it hard to have our wishes opposed—our motives misunderstood, or our "good deeds evil spoken of." Yet these must often occur. It is wisest to meet unkind remark and ridicule, with little notice, or with no reply; as Eneas was instructed to pass in silence, the monstrous shapes, and mocking chimeras, which his sword menaced in vain. Thus, the waste of feeling is saved, and the triumph of

malice prevented ; for malice is more readily disarmed by indifference, than by conflict, or retaliation.

It is a still higher attainment in the science of self-command, to bear trials of temper with an unchanged cheerfulness of deportment. "In all my persecutions," said Count Bouneval, an unfortunate officer, under Prince Eugene, "I have never lost either my appetite, or my good humour." Uncongenial companions and employments, for which we have no taste, must sometimes be endured. The sweet and salutary submission with which such untoward circumstances may be sustained, was beautifully illustrated by Winkelman : "While I taught a-b-c, to little slovenly children, I was aspiring after the knowledge of the beautiful, and meditating low to myself on the similes of Homer. Then I said, as I still say, 'Peace, my soul, thy strength shall surmount thy necessities.'"

A fixed principle of equanimity is required, not only to discharge duties adverse to the taste, but to meet without elation, the sudden sunbeam of prosperity. The nature of our government admits of unexpected changes in the condition of men, and reverses for which there could have been little or no preparation. A firm and accurate mental balance is required, to hold our way upon a height without giddiness. Perhaps, no better eulogium has been pronounced on the wife of Cesar, than the remark of an historian, that the triumphs of her husband never inspired her with presumption,

nor his reverses with dejection. No change of manner, ever designated to others, when she was the wife of the senator, or the wife of the master of the world. Though a participation in Roman triumphs, will never put our philosophy to the proof; yet the principle of equanimity under every change of fortune, is both noble and consistent in the daughters of a republick. "Those continual crossings and traversings which beset us," says a Christian moralist, "are but so many lessons, teaching us to conform ourselves to the life of Him, who pleased not himself."

Self-control is essential to females because the duties of their peculiar station so often demand its exercise. Though they are happily excused from a part in those political convulsions, which leave traces of blood on the tablet of history, yet in the routine of domestick life, are many unforeseen and distressing emergencies, which need the calm summoning and prompt application of every power. How often do sudden sickness, or severe casualty, require the aid of the tenderest hand. And how painful is it for the sufferer to be distressed by the agitation of those whom he loves, or by their inability to render such services as are most important to his welfare.

The dangers which occur in travelling, or on voyages, are often of an appalling nature. Then, it is the part of our sex, not to embarrass those who have the superintendence, with the burden of their own fears, to do with as much calmness as

they can command, all that is in their power for the aid or consolation of others, and to bear with resignation, their own share of evil. Confidence in the Supreme Being, and an habitual surrender of ourselves to the care of that Providence, without which "not a sparrow falleth," are the surest foundations for this fabrick of duty. A serene brow, a calm voice, and a manner free from perturbation, amid impending dangers, are high attainments in woman, and often aid to inspire the stronger sex with courage, amid their more exposed stations of hazard and of toil. The Rev. John Wesley, during a voyage to America, encountered a terrible storm, which threatened shipwreck. The most hardy seamen gave up all for lost, and many proud minds yielded to dismay and despair. Amid this scene of confusion, he saw a little band of Moravians gathered together, singing with calm voices, a hymn to the Redeemer. It was sweet in that hour of tumult and terror, to hear the tones of the mother and the child, blend untremulous with the deeper intonations of the father, and the pastor.—Beyond all hope, the tempest subsided. Wesley expressed his surprise to the spiritual teacher of the Moravians, at the self-command of his people, especially of the more timid sex, and of the little ones. "*Our women and children,*" he replied with simplicity, "*are not afraid to die.*"

If timidity in seasons of danger, should be resisted, the indulgence of imaginary fears, is still less to be tolerated. Few causes have more con-

aspired to perpetuate the opinion of the mental inferiority of females, than their tendency to yield to slight alarms. To shriek at a reptile, to be ready to swoon at every unpleasant sight, to express exaggerated sentiments of terror on every possible occasion, though it may be endured or even flattered in the season of youth and beauty, is entirely beneath that dignity which our sex ought to maintain. There is also a vain imagination, nourished by improper reading, which produces ridiculous results. To fancy one's self in this very "matter-of-fact age," an object of admiration to chivalrous knights, and disguised heroes, or in danger from assassins, robbers, or spectral and undefinable beings, is too ludicrous for serious argument. Scorn all affectation, but consider that of fear, as especially ill-judged and unfortunate. That construction of character which leads woman to depend on man as her natural protector, is calculated to awaken his interest, because it arouses him to what his Creator intended him to be, a guard and covert for the "weaker vessel." But it is false policy to make unnecessary appeals. They have no effect upon the judicious, except to create disgust. If you are really timid, my dear young friends, set yourselves to reform it as a fault of character. Summon to uniform and rational action, the powers with which you are endowed, and strengthen them by trust in the sleepless watch of His fatherly care, to whom the lowest sigh of the feeblest nature is audible

I have seen in one of our own sex, a presence of mind so consistent, that no unexpected duty, or sudden alarm, or distressing emergency, found it unprepared. The judgment was always clear, the spirits unhurried, and the mind ready for action. It was united with superior talents, and gained from all who witnessed it, perfect respect. It seemed, in this instance, to have affinity with the principle of longevity, and to aid life to run clear, and bright, and dregless, to the last drop. In beholding it intimately, as it was my privilege to do, I have often been reminded of the beautiful sentiment of Plutarch, "one of the rewards of philosophy, is long life." Rational and firm piety was at its foundation, and as it has been exemplified by woman, so doubtless it may be again.

To eradicate our passions, to annihilate the strong perceptions of pleasure and pain, and to preserve apathy under severe afflictions, would be impossible, if it were desired, and not to be desired, if it were possible. "It is not right," says the excellent Pascal, "that we should remain without pain or grief, under the afflictions which befall us, like angels, who are above the sentiments of our nature; neither is it right that we should indulge grief without consolation, like heathen, who have no sentiments of grace. But we ought both to mourn and to be comforted like Christians; the consolations of grace should rise superior to the feelings of nature, so that grace may not only dwell *in*, but be victorious *over* us." To be de-

void of emotion is not required by the Author of our being. The sympathies of this state of sorrow would be but faintly exhibited ; the duties that depend upon the affections but feebly performed, were a system of stoicism established. But so to temper the discordant principles of our nature, that they disturb not the harmony of society, so to rule its stormy elements, that they make not shipwreck of the soul, is a practicable science.

It has been urged as a reproach to our sex, that we were prone to be discomposed by trifles. Our business is among trifles. Household occupations, to men engrossed by the sublime sciences, seem a tissue of trifles. Yet, as "trifles make the sum of human things," so the comfort of a family is affected by the touching, or not touching, many minute springs, which like "a wheel within a wheel," are of secret operation, but essential importance. Susceptible as we are, by our original construction, and often rendered more so, by delicate health, or nervous temperament, trivial obstacles are sometimes encountered with less calmness, than heavy adversities. Our danger from slight causes of irritation, is obvious. So also is the remedy. Suffer not the heart to be fixed on trifles. If our sphere of action comprises them, there is no reason why they should destroy our capacity for enjoyment. Supply the thoughts with nobler subjects of contemplation. When the little angry billows beat against the bark, *look aloft*

The pole-star never varies. The pilot is always the same.

Presence of mind is an attainment highly to be valued. Those who are desirous to possess it, must avoid the indulgence of whatever disorders the equilibrium of the mind. They should *never be in a hurry*. This is not only ungraceful, and uncomfortable to others, but often subversive of the end in view. It has been long acknowledged by observers of human nature, that those who are most frequently in a hurry, perform the least. They overthrow their own plans, and the mind which loses its balance, like a planet which forsakes its sphere, is in danger of disconcerting the orbit of others, and running wild into the realm of disorder.

Because woman is deficient in physical strength, it does not follow that she need be so in moral courage. Many examples might be cited, to prove that she is not. Passive and patient endurance has been often so naturalized, as to seem indigenous. Instances of intrepidity might also be adduced, which has conquered the most formidable difficulties and dangers. When Queen Christina was once visiting some ships-of-war, that were building at Stockholm, a circumstance occurred which revealed her presence of mind in danger. While crossing a narrow plank, conducted by the oldest admiral, in consequence of a false step, he fell, and drew her with him, into water nearly a hundred feet in depth. Some of



the first nobles of the realm, plunging in, she was rescued. The moment her head was raised above the sea, entirely forgetful of herself, she said, "Take care of the admiral." On being brought to shore, she testified no agitation, but having been expected to dine in publick that day—she did so, with perfect calmness of manner, and her usual degree of animation.

Another instance, shows still more fully, her admirable self-control. An assassin, such as too often lurks in the vicinity of courts, had determined to take away her life. He was disordered in intellect, and laid his plan both with the cunning and rashness of insanity. He sought the queen, during divine service in the chapel, and waited for the moment, when, according to the ritual of the Swedish church, the act of recollection is performed. Then every member of the congregation kneeling, and covering the face with the hand, engages in silent and separate devotion. Rushing through the crowd, and striking aside the guards, who crossed their partisans at his approach, he leaped the barrier that divided him from the queen, and aimed a deadly blow at her, with a knife. His design was prevented, and he was seized and borne away. Christina, fixing her eyes upon him calmly for a moment, returned to her devotions, and no subsequent emotion testified that her life had been in danger.

Firmness and magnanimity are not often thus tested in woman, but history has connected with

her, many illustrations of that moral courage, which rises with opposing circumstances, and turns even adversity to advantage.

During the troubles that convulsed the reign of Henry VI. of England, Margaret, his queen, having adventured her life to rescue her captive husband, was flying after defeat in battle. She found herself in the midst of a thick forest in Scotland, not knowing whither to direct her course. Amid thick darkness, that would have terrified one less heroick, and fatigue that must have exhausted every spirit but that of a mother, she bore in her arms her only son, Prince Edward, who had sunk from weariness, and want of food. The almost impervious wood was infested by bold and relentless robbers. A band of them, starting from their hiding-places, seized the royal fugitive, and plundered her of the jewels, on which alone she depended for subsistence. Still, preserving her presence of mind, she meditated the means of escape. Perceiving that they were about to quarrel about the division of the treasure, she waited until they were engaged in contention, and then, with her child, plunged into the pathless forest.

A short time only elapsed, when from a dark thicket, a gigantick robber suddenly approached her, with a drawn sword. By the concealed light that he bore, she saw that his countenance was grim and dead to pity. Raising her spirits to the fearful occasion, she held towards him the young prince, and with a serene and commanding voice

said : " Here, my friend, save the son of your king ! " Awed by her majesty, and subdued by so unwonted an appeal to his generosity, he kneeled at her feet, took in his arms the sacred charge intrusted to him, and by his aid, Margaret being enabled to reach the coast, safely embarked for Flanders.

Patience in sickness, and the power of physical endurance, have been conceded to our sex. They have also repeatedly exemplified a noble fortitude under afflictions of the heart. Illustrations might be gathered from the pages of history, and one which has been to me peculiarly touching, is that of Lady Russell. Though, from your acquaintance with the history of England, you are doubtless familiar with it, you will allow me the gratification of slightly recapitulating it. When her husband, Lord William Russell, distinguished for patriotism and virtue, was arraigned by the turbulence and tyranny which marked a part of the reign of Charles II., and stood on his trial for life, he was inhumanly refused the benefit of counsel. All that he could obtain, was permission for an amanuensis to assist him in taking notes. Immediately his wife came to his side with her pen, serene and self-possessed, to aid him in that last extremity. When the daughter of the noble Earl of Southampton, the favourite of the people, was seen performing this painful service for her lord, a murmur of the deepest sympathy and indignation arose from that assembly. After his unjust condemna-

tion, when she came to take her last farewell of him in prison, though her tenderness for him was inexpressible, she controlled the expression of grief, lest she might discompose the soul that she loved, while it stood on the solemn verge of eternity. When she had departed, the sentenced nobleman said, "Now the bitterness of death is past;" and prepared himself for the scaffold with Christian heroism.

There are many instances where the heart rules its agony, that difficult duty may be firmly discharged, which no splendour of rank renders illustrious, and no historian's tablet records. The noble principles which actuated this illustrious lady, may operate in obscurity and poverty, where the soul, unsustained by sympathy, uncheered by human applause, depends solely on itself, and on its God. An incident of recent occurrence exhibits equal fortitude, though differently called into exercise. One of the small islands in Boston bay, was inhabited by a single poor family. The father was taken suddenly sick. There was no physician. The wife, on whom every labour for the household devolved, was sleepless in care and tenderness, by the bed of her suffering husband. Every remedy in her power to procure, was administered, but the disease was acute, and he died. Seven young children mourned around the lifeless corpse. They were the sole beings upon that desolate spot. Did the mother indulge the grief of her spirit and sit down in despair? No. She entered upon the

arduous and sacred duties of her station. She felt that there was no hand to aid her in burying her dead. Providing as far as possible for the comfort of her little ones, she put the babe into the arms of the oldest, and charged the two next in age, to watch the corpse of their father. She unmoored her husband's fishing boat, which but two days before, he had guided over the sea, to obtain food for his family. She dared not yield to those tender recollections, that might have unnerved her arm. The nearest island was at the distance of three miles. Strong winds lashed the waters to foam. Over the loud billows, that wearied and sorrowful woman rowed, and was preserved. She reached the next island, and obtained necessary aid. With such energy did her duty to her desolate babes inspire her, that the voyage which depended on her individual effort, was performed in a shorter period than the returning one, when the oars were managed by two men, who went to assist in the last offices to the dead.

Instances of fortitude might be gathered from almost every rank and station, at home and abroad. Still, it is not for calamities of great magnitude, such as fill the publick eye with sympathy, that our sex are frequently summoned to prepare themselves. It is rather to bear with serene patience the lesser ills of life, and to evince the uniform guidance of correct principles and dispositions, in the sheltered province of domestick duty.

In our sex, there is a pliancy of mental, as well

as physical organization, which readily adapts itself to change of situation. This renders it easier for them to perform that important class of duties, which console and animate those whom they love under reverses or sorrows. How often amid the wilds of this western world, has the cheering smile of the wife or daughter, sustained the desponding emigrant. How often have they forgotten their own privations, in the labours which procured comfort for others.

The most refined minds, have sometimes displayed this magnanimity in the greatest prominence. "O what a comfort!" exclaimed the accomplished Elizabeth Smith, when after the failure of the bank, which had reduced them from affluence to poverty, she followed the fortunes of her father, and quitting a beautiful mansion and endeared society, entered the rude barracks which had been provided for the family, in Ireland.—"Comfort!" said her mother, "there seems none left for us."—"O yes," replied she, "sweetest, dearest mother, see, here is a little cupboard." The matron acknowledged herself reproved by the bright smile of that angel-spirit, which would have called forth verdure and beauty amid the most parched and dreary pilgrimage of life.

Among the many females, who in this land have encountered the toils of emigration, and the hardships inseparable from the establishment of a new colony, was one, who half a century since, removed with her husband, and the young germs of their

household, to the distant and unsettled western expanse. The fatigues and perils of their journey were unusual. Many miles at its close, were through a tangled forest, whose only path, was a rude trace, cut by the axe. A strong vehicle, drawn by oxen, conveyed their simple furniture and means of subsistence. The wife and mother cheerfully proceeded on foot. Her first-born, a boy of ten years old, was sickly, and seemed rather like a denizen of the grave, than a hardy pioneer of the unplanted world. She was strengthened to bear him the greater part of the way, in her arms, or clinging to her shoulders, and to comfort his sad heart with hymns when they halted to rest.

In the recesses of a dreary forest, they formed their habitation of rough logs, and covered it with hemlock bark. Its floor was of earth, and they had no windows of glass, through which to admit the cheering beam of heaven. The mistress of that poor dwelling, exerted herself by neatness, and order, and an unvarying cheerfulness of manner, to lead its inmates to forget their many privations. She did not sadly contrast it with the lighted halls, and carpets, and sofas, and vases of breathing flowers, among which she had spent her youth; nor with the circles of elegance and refinement, which she had loved, and where she had been beloved in return. She made herself happy among the hard duties which became the wife of a lowly emigrant. Reverses of fortune, had made

this removal necessary, and she determined not to repine.

Through the day she laboured, and the carol of her frequent song rose up strangely sweet, from the bosom of that deep wilderness. At evening, she assembled her children, and instructed them. She could not bear that ignorance should be their portion, and diligently poured into their minds, the knowledge which she had treasured up in her own. They early learned to love the few books that she possessed, and to revere that piety, which was the source of their parent's happiness.

Years fled, and the features of the savage landscape, assumed the busy cast of a vigorous settlement. Her children, and her children's children grew up, and planted themselves around her, like the stems of the banian. More than fourscore years passed over her, yet she remained firm, useful, contented, and wearing on her countenance the same smile which had lighted her through the world. Her descendants of the third generation, became equal in number to the years of her own life. She loved all; and every one heard from her lips, the teachings of wisdom, and the law of peace.

At length, Death came for her. As he slowly approached, Time drew a misty curtain over all surrounding things. The love of her first, far home, and the unfulfilled hope to visit it, had been the most deep-set earthly images in her soul. Even that pictured scenery faded away. The



paternal mansion, with its sweet flower-garden, and musick of falling waters—the school-house, with its merry group—the white spire among the elms—images from childhood, so indelible, were no more remembered. Her children, gathering in tears around her bed, were also forgotten. Yet still they heard her softly murmuring from her dying pillow: “Our Father, who art in heaven.” And even when Death smote her, the favourite petition under all the sorrows of her pilgrimage, burst forth, in a clear deep intonation, “*Thy will be done.*”

The first effectual step towards self-government, is *self-knowledge*. The law-giver who would adapt his code to the happiness of a people, must inform himself of their history and habits, their dangers, and resources. The physician should know something of the constitution of his patient, as well as of the symptoms of disease, ere he can safely assume the responsibility of his cure. And you, dear young friends, who would be adepts in the science of self-control, must not only take a general view of the infirmities of your nature, but of your individual weaknesses, your tendencies to prejudice, and temptations to evil. Inquire what has been the source of the prevailing errors which have hitherto marked your life. Daily pursue the investigation, until you are intimate with your own peculiarities and motives of conduct. Nightly converse with yourself ere you retire to rest. Thus will you learn where to apply the check, the

remedy, the encouragement, and with rational hope of success, mark out the path in which you are to travel, and the points where you may indulge repose.

Self-control is promoted by humility. Pride is a fruitful source of uneasiness. It keeps the mind in disquiet. Too high an opinion of ourselves, involves the desire of impressing others with the same opinion. This is often attended with difficulty. If we do not succeed in inspiring them with an equal idea of our own merits, we shall be expecting more deference and regard than they are inclined to pay. So, pride will be disappointed and offended. Possibly we may see others the object of those attentions which were withheld from us. We are sure that they are less worthy than ourselves. Then pride calls in envy and jealousy, who wait in her train, and raises a mutiny in the soul. So, the mind which ought to settle and subside, that the powers which have a right to rule within it, may rise to their just degrees of ascendancy, becomes like the "troubled sea, which cannot rest." Humility is the antidote of this evil. As those who have taken the widest range in knowledge, perceive untravelled regions beyond them, to which the "little hour-glass of man's life" is not adequate, so those who have gained the highest ascents in true wisdom, are disposed to take the lowest place at the footstool of God. Sir Francis Bacon, in a devout address to the Almighty, preserved among his manuscripts, says: "Ever

when I have ascended before men, I have descended in humiliation before Thee." The great Boerhaave, so distinguished by the attainment of the most serene self-command, was so profoundly humble, that when he heard of any criminal condemned to execution, he would exclaim: "Who can tell, whether this man is not better than I? Or if I am better, it is not to be ascribed to myself, but to the goodness of God." The celebrated Elizabeth Smith, whose short life was an unvaried scene of virtue, whose industry vanquished many obstacles to obtain the knowledge of nine languages, and whose translations from the Hebrew and German were the wonder of the learned, gained such an intimate acquaintance with her nature, and so entire a victory over it, that her distinguishing feature was humility, and she was sweetly characterized, as

" Still unobtrusive, serious, and meek,  
The first to listen, and the last to speak."

Self-government is promoted by correct views of life. She who considers it a state where accomplishments will always ensure admiration, and merit receive full reward—where it is necessary only to embark on the "smooth surface of a summer sea," and gain the port, amid the applauses of favouring spectators—will discover that fancy and fiction have deluded her. She who imagines that its duties may be easily discharged, or their performance always appreciated—that virtue will have

no foes to resist, and unalloyed happiness flourish in a congenial soil, will find that she has mistaken a state of trial for a state of reward. She who expects entire consistency from those around, and is astonished that they sometimes misunderstand and grieve her, should look deeper into her own heart, and inquire, why she exacts from others, a perfection which she has not herself attained. Be not satisfied, my dear young friends, until you have gained that equanimity which is not depressed or elated by slight causes ; that dignity which descends neither to trifle, nor to be trifled with; and that perseverance in the pursuit of excellence, which presses onward and upward, as an eagle toward the sun.

“The highest and most profitable learning,” says Thomas à Kempis, “is the knowledge of ourselves. To have a low opinion of our own merits, and to think highly of others, is an evidence of wisdom. Therefore, though thou seest another openly offend, and commit sin, take thence no occasion to value thyself for superior goodness, since thou canst not tell how long thou wilt be able to persevere in the narrow path of virtue. All men are frail, but thou shouldest reckon none so frail as thyself.”

No self-government is perfect without religion, for since there are agents within us, whose force we may fail to estimate, and which springing suddenly into action, may destroy the fabrick on which philosophy has laboured for years ; and since we

have not the gift of prescience, and cannot always measure the future by the past, is it not safest to rely for aid on the Former of our bodies, the Father of our spirits, who hath said, "if any lack wisdom, and ask of Him, he giveth liberally and upbraideth not?"

Let us rest our self-control on the belief that He is able to do all things—that he will do all things well—that even evil shall work for the good of those who love him, that nothing can divide us from his care, and that even death cannot hurt those who have the passport to a happy immortality.

## LETTER XV.

### UTILITY.

It was a king of Sparta, who counselled that the young should learn, what they would have most occasion to practice, when they reached maturity. We praise his wisdom; yet recede from its guidance. Especially, is female education deficient in its adaptation of means to ends. And yet, our province is so eminently practical, that to disjoin acquisition from utility, seems both a greater mistake and a more irreparable misfortune, than for the other sex, to adopt a desultory system.

Man lives in the eye of the world. He seeks much of his solace from its applause. If unsuccessful in one profession, he enters another. If his efforts are frustrated in his native land, he becomes the citizen of a foreign clime. He makes his home on the tossing wave, or traverses the earth from pole to pole. His varieties of situation, give scope for varieties of knowledge, and call into action, energies and attainments, which might long have lain dormant, or been considered of little value. It is not thus with woman. Her sphere of quiet duty requires a more quiet training. Its scenery has few changes, and no audience to ap-

plaud. It asks the aid of fixed principles, patiently drawn out into their natural, unostentatious results.

There was in past times, much discussion respecting the comparative intellect of the sexes. It seems to have been useless. To strike the balance, is scarcely practicable, until both shall have been subjected to the same method of culture. Man might be initiated into the varieties and mysteries of needlework, taught to have patience with the feebleness and waywardness of infancy, or to steal with noiseless step, around the chamber of the sick ; and woman might be instigated to contend for the palm of science, to pour forth eloquence in senates, or to "wade through fields of slaughter, to a throne." Yet revoltings of the soul would attend this violence to nature, this abuse of physical and intellectual energy, while the beauty of social order would be defaced, and the fountains of earth's felicity broken up. The sexes are manifestly intended for different spheres, and constructed in conformity to their respective destinations, by Him who bids the oak brave the fury of the tempest, and the Alpine flower lean its cheek on the bosom of eternal snows. But disparity need not imply inferiority ; and she of the weak hand and the strong heart, is as deeply accountable, for what she has received, as clearly within the cognizance of the "Great Task-Master's eye," as though the high places of the earth, with all their pomp and glory, awaited her ambition, or strewed their trophies at her feet.

Females, who turn their existence to no good account, contradict the intention of their Creator. They frustrate both his bounty and their felicity. Publick opinion has not been sufficiently distinct, in its reproofs of their aimless life. It has been held derogatory to the dignity of those who are in the possession of wealth, to understand the more humble departments of domestick industry. Hence, their exceeding helplessness, when by the fluctuations of fortune, or the common accidents of life, they are thrown upon their own resources. Their miserable imbecility, in times of trial, has brought that odium upon education itself, which only belongs to ill-directed education, or to a sentiment of false shame, which should be early rooted out. Useful occupations ought not to be discouraged by the contempt of those, who are not obliged to pursue them for a livelihood. In the ancient republicks, the diligence of our sex was honourable. Franklin, had probably in his mind, some model, depicted by the historians and poets of another age, when he said, "I would much rather see a spinning-wheel, than a piano—a shuttle than a parasol—a knitting-needle, than a visiting-card." Perhaps, he detected, even in his own times of greater simplicity, a love of indolence, or display, lurking in the hearts of his fair countrywomen. Perhaps, he reasoned, as a political economist, for the good of his country. In either case, the opinion of so shrewd a philosopher, is worthy of some regard. Those employments which tend, evidently,



to the comforts, or necessities of existence, are least encumbered with the principle of vanity.

Ladies, who have attained eminence, as instructors, have ever early endeavoured to impress on the mind of their pupils, the excellence of connecting their attainments with utility. The principal of the Troy Female Seminary, whose persevering aim to improve her own sex, has been blessed with illustrious success, expresses her desire that "some plan of education, should be offered to wealth, and rank, by which female youth might be preserved from contempt of useful labour; and so accustomed to it, in conjunction with the high objects of literature and the elegant pursuits of the fine arts, as, both from habit and association, to regard it as respectable."

The editor of the "American Ladies' Magazine," whose efforts for the support and education of her fatherless children have known no declension, is, both by example and precept, an advocate for the consecration of talents, to high and obvious utility.

Would that I might succeed in persuading you, my young friends, to strive that all your attainments should minister to the happiness of others, as well as your own. Scrutinize the motives that prompt you to excel, either in the sciences, or arts of embellishment. Is it that you may take precedence of your associates?—or win empty adulation? The antidote for this malady, is to do nothing, say nothing, be nothing, merely from the

prompting of vanity, but for the sake of your own radical improvement, and the mental elevation or innocent enjoyment of those, among whom your lot is cast.

The principle of display should be, as far as possible, disjoined from female education. Until this is attempted, the domestick sphere can scarcely be rationally or prosperously filled, nor will those duties be well discharged, which a republick imperiously demands of its daughters. The greatest danger arises, from what we call *accomplishments*. At first view, it seems ill-judged, to devote so much time to attainments, whose exercise is incompatible with domestick duties, and which must be laid aside, when the cares of maturity assert their dominion. Yet if in their progress, they have exerted aught of beneficial influence on the character, if they have served to soften, to refine, or sublimiate the feelings, it is a severe calculation, that would condemn them as valueless.

Let us bring some of them to the test. When you sing, or take a seat at the piano, inquire whether you expect praise, or are chagrined if you do not obtain it? whether you imposed a fatiguing quarantine of urgency, ere you would expose your performance? or whether you were content to sooth and enliven other spirits as well as your own, with those strains of melody, whose perception is a source of bliss, both to earth and heaven. In dancing, is your object to be admired? or do

you seek healthful exercise, or improvement in courtesy and grace ? for grace of movement, or as it has been happily styled "the poetry of motion," is of no slight import in woman. Like fine manners it aids in winning that influence, which she should consecrate to far higher purposes than personal vanity. For your skill in drawing, do you claim elaborate praise ? or are you pleased simply to illustrate nature, to embody historical truth, or to catch the intelligence of living features ? for the taste that appreciates the beautiful in nature or in art, is a friend to refinement and religion : and often has the tender soul, by the beauty and glory of creation, been bowed in adoration of the Creator.

But if the evidence of the utility of accomplishments is sometimes uncertain, if even their process of self-examination is difficult, from the disguises which vanity assumes, the solid studies are subject to no such ambiguity. The patient labours of thought and demonstration, the wonders of the orb that we inhabit, the varied annal of man's way from "Eden to this hour," the mysterious mechanism of the frame that modifies the ethereal mind, the structure of that intellect which bears the stamp of immortality, the awful order of the starry heavens, above which we hope to find an enduring mansion, impart discipline as obvious as it is salutary, and prepare for destinies both human and divine.

Connect with this sure gain of knowledge, an-

other source of profit, the *habit of imparting it*. This increases mental wealth, by putting it in circulation. A merchant would be found defective in his profession, who after having secured the profit of his labours should permit them to remain unemployed. He would merge his own character, in that of a miser, and pine with poverty, in the midst of abundance. I have no hesitation in pronouncing the labour of instruction, more beneficial to the teacher, than even to the pupil. If a young lady, when her term of school-education is completed, should devote a period to the instruction of others, she would find the advantage on her own side, not only in the depth, confirmation, and readiness for use, which would enhance the value of her knowledge, but in that acquaintance with human nature, self-command, and reaction of moral training upon herself, which is above all price.

It is peculiarly important that our sex should have their knowledge deeply rooted in memory during youth. The absorbing nature of those cares which fill their province, in maturity, are wont to forbid their making wide excursions into the realms of science. Even should their leisure admit it, their attention will often be preoccupied by those duties, which springing from the affections, overpower the claims of intellect; as the banian, striking new roots in earth, while its head aspires to heaven, shuts from the sun the plants that once flourished on the same soil. Necessary knowledge should therefore be thoroughly acquired in youth. It

should be able to bear the overshadowing of those mightier plants which, drawing nutriment from the heart, spring up with the rapidity of the mushroom, and the height and vigour of the cedar of Lebanon. It should be secured as a capital for life, an annuity not to be reversed.

Another argument, in favour of making the instruction of others the crowning point of education, is derived from those sentiments of benevolence, which, if not inherent in our sex, should be cultivated until they become an integral part of character. The more solid and laborious studies, by their direct discipline on the mind, have a visible individual utility. Yet be not satisfied with this, or with any other good which centres solely in *self*. A selfish woman is more unendurable, and really more blameable, than a selfish man. She more palpably contradicts the will of her Maker. She must of necessity be unhappy. For in proportion to her concentration of enjoyment in *self alone*, and her exaction of the efforts of others to that end, will be her disappointment and weariness of spirit. Be not satisfied, therefore, to possess knowledge without diffusing it, that those less favoured than yourselves may share in its blessings. Consider its acquisition as imposing a two-fold responsibility, *to enjoy and to impart*.

Admit it, therefore, as equally the *vocation* and the *privilege* of our sex, to be teachers of good things. Even when the advantages of regular classical culture have been denied, the requisites

of a profitable instructor may be obtained by a persevering regimen. Self-educated people often excel in the power of *imparting* knowledge, as those who find out their own path, take better note of its helps and hinderances. Those who have conquered obstacles by their own unassisted strength, are good pioneers in the realm of knowledge. As they were not borne thither in a chariot, they will not be apt to foster in others, that listless waiting for a "royal way," which ends where it began. They are often eminently successful in awakening the energy of their pupils, from having fully learned its value themselves. They are well qualified to point out, and to explain difficulty, and to have fellow feeling for those who grapple with it: as the man who acquires a fortune, better knows its worth, than he who idly inherits a patrimony.

There is a pleasure in teaching—the high pleasure of seeing others made better, and of receiving their gratitude. There is not a more interesting circumstance in the life of Madam de Genlis, than her fondness for instructing, when only eight years old, the poor little children, who gathered around the chateau of her father. They came thither to gather rushes and to play, and she leaning from the window of her apartment, assiduously taught them the catechism, the principles of musick, and to repeat poetry. "This," she simply expresses it, "was all I then knew myself." So much engaged, did she become in this kind office, that she

was accustomed to let herself down by a cord, from the open casement of her chamber, a distance of several feet, to the terrace, that she might be nearer the ignorant group, whom she was anxious to improve. "My little scholars," she says, "ranged along the wall below me, amidst reeds and rushes, looked up and listened to me with the most profound attention." What a subject for a painter. This beautiful and zealous teacher of eight years of age, indulged also her benevolence, by distributing among her pupils, such rewards of merit as she could obtain, passing in this favourite employment, all that part of the day, in which her governess, being engaged in writing, suffered her to follow her own inclinations. What stronger proof of an amiable and benevolent nature could be given, than this uninfluenced, unapplauded devotedness, in early childhood, of its hour of play and the contents of its purse, to the encouragement of neglected and miserable villagers?

If some young lady of education and affluence could be induced to devote a portion of her time to the work of teaching, she would help to remove from it the odium of being always a mercenary profession. There was one, in this part of New England, moving in the highest grade of society, elevated by genius, and a classick and refined education, who would have consecrated all her powers and sources of influence, to the work of instruction. The desire was not hastily imbibed. She had cherished it from childhood, alleging

as a reason, the belief that "*she could in that way be more useful than in any other.*" In the bloom of youth, surrounded with all that could render it delightful, she writes, "I can think of no pleasanter or more useful way of spending life, than in teaching. I have not made this decision suddenly. I have pondered it in my mind, and determined as soon as I shall have learned enough, to fix myself as a teacher." But she was suddenly removed, where there was no need that she should either teach, or be taught, save in the science of angels. An interesting volume, the "*Literary Remains of Martha Day,*" daughter of the President of Yale College, in Connecticut, announces to the community the loss it has sustained by her removal, and incites the favoured daughters of our favoured land to imitate her example.

Patriotism requires that every effort in our power, be made for the good of our country. Look at Prussia, that model for national education, where a teacher is provided for every ten of her children, and whose king nobly estimates it as the highest privilege of royalty, to be the father of his people. Among his many laws, making provision for the instruction of his realm, moral and religious training take precedence of intellectual; and it is glorious to hear the voice of a monarch enforcing the precept that "the first vocation of every school, is to train up the young in such a manner, as to implant in their minds a knowledge of the relation of man to God, and at the same time to excite and foster



both the will and the strength to govern their lives after the spirit and precepts of Christianity." The Normal schools, or those established for the education of teachers, are nurseries of every virtuous habit. A brief extract from the regulations of those which exist in the obscure villages of Lustadie and Pyritz, will evince the spirit of simple and unaffected piety, that pervades all the similar institutions: "This is intended to be a Christian school, founded in the spirit of the Gospel. It aspires to resemble a village household of the simplest kind, and to unite its members into one family. The piety which it enforces, is to be known by purity of manners—by sincerity in word and deed—by love of God and of his word—by love of our neighbour—by willing obedience to superiors and masters—by brotherly harmony among the pupils. A thorough knowledge of the duties of a teacher is acquired by long study of the principles and elements—by learning what is necessary and really useful in that vocation—by habits of reflection and voluntary labour—by constant application to lessons—by incessant repetition and practice—by regular industry, and well-ordered activity, according to the commandment, '*pray and work.*'"

"Their whole fabrick rests on the sacred basis of Christian love," says M. Cousin, to whom we are indebted for a luminous investigation of the system of instruction in Prussia, and who, by his noble zeal in the cause of education, has won a

more illustrious distinction than that of philosopher, statesman, or peer of France.

There is still another point, in which the schools of Prussia, may be cited as examples. Education is there imparted, not as the instrument of restless ambition, or worldly advancement, but as the capacity of patient usefulness, and contentment with the lot which Heaven has appointed. Here, the maxim that "knowledge is power," seems to have received the grosser interpretation, that it is *money* also. There, to use the words of the accomplished lady, by whom this Report of National Instruction is translated, "the unfailing ends of a good education are the gentle and kindly sympathies—the sense of self-respect, and of the respect of fellow-men—the free exercise of the intellectual faculties—the power of regulating the habits and the business of life, so as to extract the greatest possible portion of comfort, out of small means—the refining and tranquillizing enjoyment of the beautiful in nature and art, and the kindred perception of the beauty and nobility of virtue—the strengthening consciousness of duty fulfilled, and to crown the whole, that 'peace which passeth all understanding.'"

Should any of my readers inquire, why I have indulged in such digressions, I have no apology to offer. The unspeakable importance of education, and the strong desire to persuade my sex to become almoners of its blessings, merited more space than I have appropriated, and more elo-

quence than I can command. If you have a love of the country that gave you birth, my dear young friends, and if you have not, your code both of virtues and affections is most imperfect, are you not willing for a season to devote yourself to the culture of her children, as some remuneration for the privilege of dwelling safely under her auspices? Will you not at least, become the instructor of all in your own family, who may be made better by your influence? Will you not teach through your own example, the happiness that goodness and piety convey, the gracefulness they impart, the assimilation they give to angelick natures, and thus win all hearts to your tutelage?

Our sex in point of situation, have facilities as teachers, which are not possessed by the other. Political prejudices, and the asperities of religious controversy, sometimes fetter the operations of men and obstruct their access to the mind. On this "debateable ground," woman is not supposed to stand. A young lady, perhaps more effectually than any other character, has power to cast the "oil of kindness," upon the waters of discord. Her locality need not be obstructed, or circumscribed by the "quick set hedge" of party jealousies. She may gather the lambs that wander, and no lion will lay waste her fold. That she will not decline this hallowed service, is already promised, by one who has for many years consecrated distinguished intellect, acquirements and piety, to the successful instruction of youth. "Let the statisticks of the

wants of our country be sent abroad," says Miss Beecher, in her *Essay on the Education of Female Teachers*, "let the cry go forth, 'Whom shall we send and who will go for us?' and from amid the green hills and white villages of New England, hundreds of voices would respond, 'Here am I, send me,' while kindred voices, through the whole length of the land, would echo the reply."

A lady of education and refinement was led by the tide of emigration to a western home. She determined to keep constantly in view the diffusion of intelligence and morality, in the community where her lot was cast. By the rapid growth, peculiar to this new world, a partial wilderness suddenly became a thriving settlement. When she was released from the absorbing cares connected with the nurture of an infant family, she resolved to devote more time to the instruction of others. Her husband kindly encouraging the noble design, built her a school-house in their garden. Thither she gathered the young, and taught them to be useful and happy. From such as were able, she received the usual stipend for tuition, and devoted it to the purchase of a library for the school, or to valuable books, intended as parting gifts for exemplary pupils. Even from the poor, she took some compensation, that they might not feel humbled by too much inequality, though it was more than returned to them, in the form of some present, adapted to stimulate their progress in improvement. She paid particular attention to the

instruction of those, who were likely to be employed as teachers of village-schools. Her daughters, as they rose around her, caught the same hallowed zeal, and were anxious to instruct in various departments, and the good devised and wrought out by this "mother in Israel," will doubtless be felt by unborn generations.

I venture to propose that some young lady, in the enjoyment of affluence, should perform the noble charity of commencing a Normal school, and instructing, or causing to be instructed, ten of her own sex, until they shall, in their turn, be qualified to instruct others. No costly endowment need be connected with an establishment of this nature. The pupils might probably be gathered in the immediate vicinity.

If they have received the common rudiments of education, two or three hours of personal attendance daily, with perhaps, the care of a substitute, for two or three more, would, with the adoption of a judicious system, prepare in the course of three years, a class of profitable teachers, for elementary schools, and even for higher departments. Why need any formiable expense be involved in such an arrangement? If some of the recipients were able to pay a small price for tuition, it might aid in the purchase of books for their use. If they were not, the bounty of our land, is never invoked in vain. The author of the "Annals of Education," to whose perseverance and research, both his country and the world are indebted, says: "We

hope ere long, to see associations of females, engaged in supporting and preparing those of their own sex for the office of teacher. Recent calculations in a city of England, have led to the belief, that the efforts of one female in a benevolent object were equivalent to those of thirteen of the other sex."

The preparation of competent teachers for our village-schools, would be a lasting benefit to the country. The evil in our remote districts, has been incalculable, from illiterate teachers coming in contact with the mind in its season of early development and indelible impression. Would it be beneath the notice of a lady to bestow some systematick instruction on such young females as are destined to assist in the domestick care of little children, and in whom moral integrity, correct language and manners, and a sense of religious obligation, have a deeper value and wider influence, than would be readily conceded or imagined?

But I would not prescribe the particular forms in which benevolent young ladies, having the command of time, knowledge or wealth, may subserve the cause of happiness and virtue, by acting as teachers. Their own ingenuity and the circumstances in which they are placed, will best define the channels, where this hallowed charity may flow. Let them, however, adopt *teaching as their charity*, and give to it regularly and laboriously, some portion of every day. It need not interfere with other employments and pleasures. Even if

it should curtail some amusement in which youth delights, their payment will be the gold of conscience, and those radiant and priceless memories, that visit the death-bed. If it prove a self-denial, it will be a glorious one. And when they stand before that bar, where all shall be summoned, if it appear that one fellow-being has been snatched from vice, or fortified in virtue, or anchored on the "Rock of salvation," through their instructions, what can the world which shall be burned as a scroll, or all the glory thereof, which shall vanish as a vision, offer in exchange for such a testimony?

## LETTER XVI.

### MOTIVES TO PERSEVERANCE.

WE are impelled, my dear young friends, to higher degrees of intellectual and moral effort, by the *continually advancing character of the age in which we live*. It does not permit the mind to slumber at its post, with any hope of regaining a respectable rank in the career of knowledge. Its literary gymnasium has no dormitories. It stamps with deficiency, what was considered a good education, twenty, or even ten years since. She who was then held accomplished, if she has remained content with her early attainments, will find herself painfully surpassed by the spirit of the times. The usury of our day, does not permit the "talent to be long wrapped in a napkin." Those studies which formerly marked the closing grade of education, are now familiar to the infant scholar. So much has knowledge divested itself of mystery and of majesty, that "the sucking child plays upon the hole of the asp, and the weaned child puts his hand upon the cockatrice den." Every thing urges us onward, in the pilgrimage of mind. The standard is constantly elevating itself, and she who



would not be left behind, must take pains to maintain a corresponding elevation.

In the department of benevolence also, as well as in that of intellect, there is an equally perceptible progress. Not many years since, the sphere of missionary labour was first explored. Now "*its field is the world.*" The vast machinery, by which the Scriptures are dispensed to heathen climes, was then undiscovered and unimagined. Many of those charities, which stoop to every variety of human wretchedness, were either unborn or in their infancy. Now the economy of charity is unfolded to the young. The most gifted minds simplify wisdom to the comprehension of children. The bread of eternal life is mingled with the milk of babes. Those who enter upon the stage of action stand upon vantage-ground, and are enriched with the concentrated experience of many generations.

*Our individual privileges*, as well as the energetic character of the age, demand persevering exertions. We are enriched with gifts to which our ancestors were strangers. Our responsibilities are proportionably great. The useful arithmetical position, impressed in our childhood, that "more requires more, and less requires less," admits of a moral application. The temple of science has been thrown open, and its sanctuary, so long hidden from the eye of woman, unveiled. She is invited to enter. In the olden time, our grandmothers received instruction, in the uses of the needle, the

varieties of culinary science, and the naked elements of piety. They were expected to exhibit the knowledge drawn from these few sources, in its most patient, persevering, and practical results. It would have been counted an "iniquity to be punished by the judges," had they spoiled their tent-stitch tapestry—or failed in the chymistry of a pudding, or erred in the verbiage of their catechism. Most faithful were they, in the "few things" intrusted to their care. We who, in being "made rulers over many things," are deeply indebted to the liberality of the age, have need of quickened and zealous industry, to render a correspondent return.

The *shelter and protection of a free government* also demand awakened and grateful energies. Since its welfare is involved in the virtue and intelligence of its subjects, the character and habits of every member of its great family, are of importance. I imagine that I hear from the lips of some of the young and sprightly of my sex, the inquiry, "Why need we concern ourselves in the affairs of politicians? what share have we in the destinies of our country?" The same share that the rill has in the rivulet, and the rivulet in the sea. Should every little shaded streamlet tarry at its fountain-head, where would be the river, that dispenses fertility—the ocean, bearing commerce and wealth upon its never-resting tide. Woman possesses an agency which the ancient republics never discovered. The young fountains of the mind are

given in charge to her. She can tinge them with sweetness or bitterness, ere they have chosen the channels where to flow, or learned to murmur their story in the time-worn pebbles. Greece, that discipline and worshippess of wisdom, neglected to appreciate the value of the feebler sex, or to believe that they, who had the moulding of the whole mass of man in its first formation, might help to mould a principle of permanence into national character. Rome, in her wolf-nursed greatness, in her "ferce democracy," in the corruption of her imperial purple, despised the moral strength that lay hidden under physical weakness. But our country has conceded every thing; the blessings of education, the equality of companionship, the luxury of benevolence, the confidence of a civiliser's office to those young buds of being, in which is her wealth and her hope. What does she require of our sex in return for these courtesies? Has she not a right to expect that we give our hands to every cause of peace and truth—that we nurse the plants of temperance and purity—that we frown on every inroad of disorder and vice—that we labour in all places where our lot may be cast, as gentle teachers of wisdom and charity, and that we hold ourselves, in domestick privacy, the guardians of those principles which the sage defends in the halls of legislation, and the priest of Jehovah upon the walls of Zion?

*Gratitude for the religion of Jesus Christ* should inspire an unwavering zeal. Beside the

high hope of salvation, which we share in common with all who embrace the Gospel, our obligations to it, as a sex, are peculiar and deep. It has broken down the vassalage which was enforced even in the most polished heathen climes. Its humility hath persuaded men to give honour to "the weaker vessel." The depressed condition of our sex in classick Greece, is familiar to all who read the pages of history. Though her epick poet portrayed, in radiant colours, an Andromache and a Penelope, yet they were but the imagery of fiction, and the situation of woman in real life was scarcely a grade above that of a slave. Even in Athens, the "eye of Greece," Thucydides, her most profound and faithful historian, asserts, that "the best woman is she of whom the least can be said, either in the way of good or harm." Her degradation into a cipher accords with their estimation of her powers, and the place they intended her to fill in creation. The brutality with which she is still treated in pagan lands, and the miseries which make her life a burden, cause her to deplore the birth of a female infant, with the same unnatural grief that the ancient Transi cherished, who, according to Herodotus, "assembled to weep when a child entered the world, on account of the evils of that existence into which he was ushered ; while they celebrated funerals with joy, because the deceased was released from all human calamities." That policy, which, for ages, regarded woman as toys of fancy for a moment, and then slaves for

ever, so vile as to be shut from the consecrated temple on earth, and so devoid of soul as to be incapable of an entrance into heaven, is "abolished by Him, who hath made both one, and broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Double cause, then, hath woman to be faithful to her Master; to be always longest at his cross and earliest at his sepulchre. Let us earnestly strive not to live altogether "to ourselves, but unto Him who hath called us to glory and virtue."

By the *shortness of life*, we are also admonished to perpetual industry. Where are those with whom we took sweet counsel, who walked hand in hand with us, beneath the sunbeams of youth's cloudless morning? The haunts of the summer ramble, the fireside-seats of winter's communion, reply, "*They are not with us.*" The grave answers the question, "*They are here!*" Doth it not also add in a hoarse and hollow murmur, "*Thou also, shalt be with me?*" How often, in the registers of mortality, do we see the date of the early smitten. How often is the fair hand, that had plucked only life's opening flowers, withdrawn from the grasp of love, and stretched out in immoveable coldness. How often is the unfrosted head laid down on a mouldering pillow, to await the resurrection. The firmest hold on time, is like the frail rooting of the flower of grass. The longest life has been likened by those who review it, to a dream, fleeting and indistinct. The present moment is all of which we have assurance. Let us

mark it with the diligence of a deeply-felt responsibility. Let us learn from the tomb its oft-repeated, yet too unheeded lesson: "What thine hand findeth to do, do with thy might;" for with me, to whom thou art hastening, is "neither wisdom, nor knowledge, nor device."

The assurance that this is a *state of probation*, should give vigour to virtue, and solemnity to truth. Every hour assumes a fearful responsibility when we view it as the culturer of an immortal harvest. Time is the seed-planter of Eternity, and every winged moment does his work and will have its wages. Here we are but in the childhood of our existence. This was deeply realized by that great philosopher to whom the universe unfolded its mysterious laws, and light, that most subtile element, revealed its mechanism, who held communion with Nature in her majesty, as the prophet walked on Sinai with his God. In the wisdom of his heaven-taught humility, he said, that his whole life seemed but as the play of children, among the sands and bubbles of the seashore. The belief that "He who knoweth our frame," keepeth us here in his fatherly school, that its discipline may qualify us to become students with angels, should incite us not only to discharge duty, but to sustain adverse appointments with an unshrinking spirit. We should ever remember that this is our trial state, and that trials, more powerfully than pleasures, ripen the fruits of righteousness. "The good things which belong to pros-

perity may be *wished*, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be *admired*," said Seneca: or to use the clearer language of Bacon, that greater than Seneca, "the virtue of prosperity is temperance, but the virtue of adversity is fortitude, and the last is the more sublime attainment." Let us strive to pass calmly under the storm, or to tread the miry path without pollution, because we are travellers to our Father's house, where nothing can enter that defileth. This world was evidently not intended for a state, where the immortal mind could receive full gratification. To resist evil, to fulfil obligation, to partake cheerfully of finite good, yet to feel its disproportion to our own boundless desires, to submit to the refiner's process in the furnace of affliction, and ardently to seek fitness for an ethereal home, is perceived to be our principal business and highest wisdom. Elevated by such contemplations, sufferings and labours will seem light. Calumny and injustice will be borne with patience, for the praise or dishonour of men is an air-bubble to those who are bound to an unerring tribunal, where "every thought is made manifest."

The sports and griefs of a child, seem to manhood as folly. Yet amid these sports and sorrows, he is cherishing the tempers which are to go with him through life, and form its happiness or woe. So, the pursuits of men, their love of variety, their eagerness for wealth, their bloody strife after honour, their agony when these rainbow-promises

fade, are folly to the eye of angels. Yet by the agency of such pursuits and disappointments are those dispositions confirmed, which either fit to dwell with angels, or exclude from their society for ever.

The objects that now agitate or delight us, must soon perish. But the habits of mind which they generate, the affections which they mature, are eternal. They go with us over the "swelling of Jordan," when, of all the riches which we have gathered, we can carry nothing away. The harmony of soul, which prepares for intercourse with "just men made perfect," the love of holiness, the spirit of praise, which constitute the temper and the bliss of heaven, must be commenced below: so that not the *scenes* through which we pass, but the *impressions which those scenes make on the soul*, are to be desired, or deprecated. Ah! who is sufficiently aware of the importance of this brief existence? Who is that "faithful and wise steward," whom his Lord, coming even at midnight, shall find prepared?

The *consciousness of immortality* is both a prompting and sustaining motive of immense influence. To do this, or to avoid that—not from considerations of personal interest, but because *we are to live for ever*—is worthy of a being, marked out by his Creator, for a

"Sky-born, sky-guided, sky-returning race."

We are too prone to be absorbed, either by the



things of this life, or by gloomy views of its termination, pressed on us by the departure of some endeared relative or friend. We busy ourselves more with the part which dieth, than with that which is immortal. Sometimes we array Death with a transforming power, or trust that the diseases which are his heralds, may bring a repentance able to atone for the errors and omissions of many years. He often steals unawares upon his victim, leaving no time for sigh or prayer. His office is to sunder the spirit from the clay, not to reform, or prepare it for heaven. He takes the soul as he finds it. It is *life* which seals our credentials for the bliss or wo of eternity. We are accustomed to anticipate the ministry of death with fear. I would say to you, rather *fear life*; for according to the character of that life, will death be to you either the king of terrors, or the herald of unspeakable joy:

“Death hath no dread, but what frail life imparts.”

We think too much of the *dark gate*, through which we pass into the eternal temple, and too little of the *pilgrimage* by which our mansion in that temple is determined. Earthly prosperity should be estimated by its influence on the soul. What we here term adversities, may in reality be blessings. When we cast off these vestments of clay, perhaps they may come in beautiful garments, to welcome us to everlasting habitations. Here, we spoke of them as evil messengers; in the court

of heaven, we may perchance recognise them, as “angels sent on errands full of love.”

By the combined influence therefore of intellectual, moral and religious obligation, by the unresting voice of Time, Judgment, and Eternity, we are impelled to diligence, perseverance and zeal in duty, urged to “forget the things that are behind, and reach forward toward those that are before, and press onward to the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

And now, my daughters, farewell! In pursuing with you, objects of tender and high concern, my heart has been drawn towards you, with something of a mother’s love. The hand that traces these lines, will soon moulder in dust; and the eye that peruses them, however radiant with hope, or brilliant in beauty, must wear the seal of clay. Though we never meet in the flesh, yet at that day when the “dead, small and great, shall stand before God,” may it be found that we have so communed in spirit, as to aid in the blessed pilgrimage to “glory—honour—immortality—eternal life.”

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